We have a paediatric practice that each week sees children and quite a number of new babies. To lodge claims on behalf of families we must know the Medicare Card number of at least one parent, together with their name (as known to Medicare) and date of birth as well as the child's. (no claim re a child's care can be processed unless parent's/ guardian's number and identifying details are also submitted where child is 13 years or under.)

We regularly access newborn Medicare numbers for parents ahead of Medicare notification to parents. Families are glad of this as it enables claims to be lodged to access substantial rebates in a year of high medical costs. (at various times over the last couple of years, Medicare has fallen behind substantially in the registering of babies at different times).

We generally rely on interface between our Medical software and Medicare's to find a child's Medicare number.

We also use the Medicare look-up service HPOS to find Medicare numbers due to more complicated situations where parent information is confused, or Medicare has not been provided by the parent. This is mostly successful but not always.

We believed that the interface between our software and Medicare's should be able to search and download a number as it can an IHI (individual health identifier). Currently we can only correct or update a largely correct number (correct but for edition and reference number) using this method. Expanding this capacity would be a more secure way of allowing sufficient access to Medicare number searching.

PRODA, recently introduced, seems to us to be a very flawed response to security issues. How do you cancel someone's PRODA once they have left? Previously our practice relied on location or site certificate web based access which tied all searching activity to the computers based in the practice. We feel this was more secure. With PRODA this access can be exploited literally from anywhere and even after someone has left the practice.

We rely on access to ensure the smooth running of our practice. Patients have been educated to expect easy and fast Medicare access by their provider (and many feel entitled to bulk billing).

Online claiming requires us to have accurate Medicare numbers entered and online claiming is very popular with families and also saves Medicare substantially on costs of its claim processing services.

Director and Practice Manager
Paediatrics at Burnside