

Clinics angry over cash losses

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Private sector providers across Dubai have been left thousands of dirhams out of pocket in the aftermath of a failed health authority-run electronic data reporting scheme.

Affected facilities are angry that the Department of Health and Medical Services (DoHMS) has made no moves to see them reimbursed for software that was necessary to fully comply with the data collection system.

Launched in July, the system was stopped in September by DoHMS as a result of physician's concerns over patient privacy.

Leaving those that bought extra software from a company called Tendercare, contracted by DoHMS to develop a unique coding system as part of the scheme, with AED40,000 (US\$ 10,890) worth of useless kit.

However, DoHMS has denied any reimbursements are due. A spokesman said all doctors had to do was fill in a five-page online form for every patient, each day - without the need for any extra software.

But facilities seeing hundreds of patients a day say the amount of data required per day would have required a full-time data-entry employee.

Buying the software, which automatically collated the information, was a cheaper and more efficient solution, said Sue Norton, owner of the Dubai Physiotherapy Clinic, which is trying to reclaim a AED20,000 (\$5,445) deposit.

"It would have taken 30 minutes for each patient and that amounts to a lot if you are seeing 25 patients a day. The only way to do this was to buy the software." she told *MT*.

Dr Michael Loubser, owner of Infinity Clinic, Al Wasl Road, who spent the full AED40,000 on software, added: "We are being penalised because we had a desire to comply."

A DoHMS spokesman said: "They did not have to have the software." An investigation was still to report its findings.

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