PAYNOW To Research Participants



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Introduction

Cash is the most popular form of payment mode for research subject's reimbursement at KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) currently. However, the process of handling petty cash float is time-consuming and labor intensive for both Clinical Research Coordinators (CRCs) and Finance staff. In tandem with the Government and Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS)'s vision to build a Smart Nation, and to improve efficiency and staff productivity, KK Research Centre (KKRC) invited the research finance team (FIN-AM), Business Office (BO) and Quality Safety & Risk Management (QSRM) to explore the electronic fund transfer method (PAYNOW) to reimburse the research subjects.

Objectives

To reduce administrative work and time spent in handling petty cash for reimbursement to research subjects within 3 months after implementation of new Work Instruction (WI) on 01 Sep 2022.

Methodology

QI (Quality Improvement) workgroup formation

Formed a QI workgroup involving relevant departments (BO, Fin-AM, KK Research Centre and QSRM) to explore electronic fund transfer method to replace cash. After several discussions and checking with banks, <u>PAYNOW</u> was identified as a suitable method.

Workflow establishment for direct payment from KKH

The QI workgroup discussed and established workflow with 1FSS on using PAYNOW to transfer the payment directly from KKH to research subjects.

A Pilot Project conduct

A Pilot Project was conducted to identify potential problems and concerns for using PAYNOW to transfer the payment directly from KKH to research subjects. KKRC chose 1 study that only involves KKH staff as study subjects. Feedback were collected after subjects received their payment. QI workgroup decided this workflow to be unfeasible as it took ≥ 6 weeks for the subjects to receive the payment via PAYNOW.

Workflow revision to CRC personal PAYNOW

The PAYNOW payment process was revised by QI workgroup. Instead of direct payment from KKH to research subjects, a fix amount of petty cash float would be given to CRCs to use their PAYNOW account to first transfer the payment to research subjects and then claim from Finance.

WI implementation on 01 Sep 2022

The process of handling petty cash float including the claim back process was revised by QI workgroup. The hospital electronic system, Accounts Payable Invoice Management System (APIMS) would replace the hardcopy petty cash claim form. The WI titled "Handling Petty Cash Float for Transport Reimbursement to Research Subjects" was revised and officially implemented on 01 Sep 2022.

Results 1. Time spent by Finance and CRCs is reduced significantly. Time Spent on Research Reimbursement by Finance per Year ☐ Initially, Finance spent **156 hrs** per year handling research 150 reimbursement in cash. reduced 100 **156** □ Now, Finance only spent **48 hrs** 50 per year. 48 ✓ Saved **108 hours** per year for Before Finance staff. Reimbursement Mode * Based on 3 months data ☐ From mid Jun to end Time Spent on Research Reimbursement by CRCs per Month 16 Aug 2022, CRCs spent averagely **563 mins** Old Avg 563 Mins per month handling research 700 8 of Claims reimbursement in cash 600 reduced and claim back via 500 hardcopy method. 400 New Avg 143 Mins 300 □ Now, CRCs only spent 200 averagely 143 mins 100 per month from Sep to mid Nov 2022. Jun Jun Jul Jul Jul Aug Aug Aug Sep Sep Sep Sep Oct Oct Oct Nov Nov

✓ Saved **7 hours** per month, 84 hours per year for CRCs.

2. Revised workflow has less steps required.

Before

Put up hardcopy request for cheque claim from BO to replenish petty cash float

After

by **CRCs** Actionable by **Finance**

Travel to KKH to do encashment from BO

> Receive claimed petty cash from

HOD's signatures

Old Workflow Using Petty Cash Float

research reimbursement and put up hardcopy petty cash claim form

Withdraw <u>cash</u> for

on claim form

Obtain PI's and

claim form to Finance

Submit the

W3 W4 W1 W2 W3 W4 W1 W2 W3 W4 W1 W2 W3 W4 W1 W2 W3 W4 W1 W2

Obtain 3 Fin-AM approvers on claim form

Receive fully endorsed claim form and prepares cash to disburse

Travel to KKH to disburse cash to CRCs

Finance

Actionable

Revised Workflow Using PAYNOW

Submit e-Payment Finance, 1FSS Use personal **PAYNOW** and PI approve **Requisition Form** for research e-form on APIMS via APIMS reimbursement

Receive claimed petty cash in bank account via GIRO

3. New workflow is developed for off-site studies.

With the transition to employ the use of PAYNOW, in Nov 2022, a new workflow for electronic acknowledgment of receipt of reimbursement by research participants was developed for scenarios or research studies where physical hospital visits are not required.

Other benefits...

4. Reduce the risk of cross infection when handling cash between research subjects and staff.

5. Improve accuracy and reduce human error, such as miscalculations and counting errors when handling cash.

6. Improve safety and security for staff not to hold onto big amount of petty cash across building.

7. Reduce administrative work (obtaining wet-inked signatures for approvals, preparing hardcopy forms) and paper wastage.

Conclusion

With the implementation of digital payment (PAYNOW) to research subjects and the use of APIMS, the time and effort spent on research reimbursement has greatly reduced allowing FIN-AM staff and CRCs to focus better on other value added work. The process converting cash into digital payment for research reimbursement was accelerated as the COVID-19 raised the awareness of the cross-infection risk. During COVID-19 pandemic, many research ers also explored research designs with minimal physical contact with subjects and thereby cut down research subjects' physical visits to hospital. For such scenarios, research subjects can now acknowledge the receipt of reimbursement without wet-inked signatures.

In conclusion, using PAYNOW to replace cash for research reimbursement is effective, it has improved work efficiency and ensures that KKH aligns with the national directives of going cashless.