**[0008]** Additionally, financial institutions/mortgagee/lienholders normally do not know if or when a claim has been filed and do not have instant access to critical claim documents such as the policy in force, building estimates, auto estimates, photos, benefit beneficiaries, *etc*. These documents have to be requested by the financial institution/mortgagee/ lienholder *etc*. from the claimant and must be faxed or mailed in. A document exchange platform that facilitates the exchange of documents between the parties to a payment or claim, and an information database system is also desired that sits on top of a multiple payee payment system described herein that automatically notifies the financial institution/mortgage comp/ lienholder that a claim has been filed and provides them with instant access to certain documents pertaining to a given claim.

**[0009]** Accordingly, there is a need for computer implemented systems and methods for facilitating resolution of multiple payee payment issues when a party/entity wants to pay multiple payees with a single electronic payment transaction and/or to conveniently negotiate a multiple payee check instrument. There is also a need for a payment network and platform that can stand alone as fully integrated network, can be dependent on other payment networks, and/or can operate with existing systems or payment networks (partially integrated). The invention described herein addresses these and other needs in the art.

SUMMARY

**[0010]** The above-mentioned needs in the art are addressed by a system and method that ensures that funds get to multiple payees in a quick, cost effective, safe, and efficient manner. The system may be used by businesses, individuals or government entities that need to send a single payment to multiple payees for whatever reason when their preferred option is not to use a paper check but an electronic payment option. In addition, the system also may be used by businesses, individuals or government entities to easily and remotely negotiate a multiple payee check. Thus, embodiments of the invention address the need for an electronic solution to the multi-payee issue by addressing the issues attendant to electronic payment processing including on-line authentication, endorsement, and notification, as well as multiple debits and deposits. As noted above, there is no analog method in the prior art that permits one to make a single payment to multiple payees in the on-line or off-line world or a system for doing so.

[0010a] According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method of facilitating electronic payment to multiple payees respective payment stakes of a single electronic payment transaction and/or respective payment stakes of a multiple payee check

payment, comprising the steps of: initiating multiple payee payment and/or a multiple payee check handling and clearing process including determining identity of the payor and/or receiving the payor's check information; receiving identification of multiple payees and respective payment stakes due each payee; placing a hold on a payor's account and/or accepting multiple payee check deposit via an ATM; alerting respective payees that funds are available; enabling payee electronic check endorsement and/or identity verification for the respective payees; receiving electronic payee endorsement and confirmation of identity and providing an endorsement file to the payor for each payee; debiting the payor's account by the respective payment stakes due to the respective payees; and disbursing the respective payment stakes to the respective payees through a payment network.

[0010b] According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a system for facilitating electronic payment to multiple payees respective payment stakes of-a single electronic payment transaction and/or respective payment stakes of a multiple payee check payment, comprising: a database storing payor and payee identity, address, and bank account information; a processor that executes instructions and communicates outputs to a payor and respective payees; and a memory that stores instructions that when executed by the processor cause the processor to perform the steps of: initiating multiple payee payment and/or a multiple payee check handling and clearing process including determining identity of the payor and/or receiving the payor's check information; receiving identification of multiple payees and respective payment stakes due each payee; placing a hold on a payor's account and/or accepting multiple payee check deposit via an ATM; alerting respective payees that funds are available; enabling payee electronic check endorsement and/or identity verification for the respective payees; receiving electronic payee endorsement and confirmation of identity and providing an endorsement file to the payor for each payee; debiting the payor's account by the respective payment stakes due to the respective payees; and disbursing the respective payment stakes to the respective payees through a payment network.

[0010c] According to a third aspect of the present invention, there is provided a non-transitory computer readable medium that stores instructions that when executed by a processor causes the processor to facilitate electronic payment to multiple payees respective payment stakes of a single electronic payment transaction and/or respective payment stakes of a multiple payee check

payment by performing the steps of: initiating multiple payee payment and/or a multiple payee check handling and clearing process including determining identity of the payor and/or receiving the payor's check information; receiving identification of multiple payees and respective payment stakes due each payee; placing a hold on a payor's account and/or accepting multiple payee check deposit via an ATM; alerting respective payees that funds are available; enabling payee electronic check endorsement and/or identity verification for the respective payees; receiving electronic payee endorsement and confirmation of identity and providing an endorsement file to the payor for each payee; debiting the payor's account by the respective payment stakes due to the respective payees; and disbursing the respective payment stakes to the respective payees through a payment network.

**[0011]** Embodiments of the invention provide a platform that enables direct deposit for entities, such as, without limitation, insurance companies and financial institutions, and to enable a quick and efficient electronic payment of a claim's compensation to a policyholder, claimant or any related party. Embodiments of the invention are implemented in a cloud server based electronic payment network/system that triangulates or enables a payout process for, *e.g.*,

insurance claims among the three main parties involved in an insurance claim: the insurance company, the claimant, and the financial institution/lienholder/stakeholder or any other interested party.

**[0012]** Embodiments of the invention further enable/facilitate/implement payment negotiation and settlement of multiple payee checks for insurance claims ranging from auto accidents, health, property damage, business claims, death, workers compensation, *etc*. Certain industries, such as, without limitation, the insurance industry, are still heavily dependent on paying all insurance claims or payouts manually with a paper check. This tends to be very costly for financial institutions and insurance companies to print, mail, negotiate, and then also to manage the payout process with a staffed "Claims Department" that monitors proper payee endorsements and sets disbursement arrangements. The system described herein automatically performs such functions. For example, exemplary embodiments of the invention provide an alternative electronic payment platform that includes a workflow that enables payee endorsement/verification and disbursement arrangement as/if required. In exemplary embodiments, the system permits a hold to be placed while notification is being initiated and for the hold to be placed on a bank or card account. The system may further enable multiple payee check deposit via ATM and provide means for notifying payees.

**[0013]** There is provided methods for facilitating payment to multiple payees from a single electronic and/or multiple payee check by performing functions including: initiating multiple payee payment, initiating a multiple payee check handling and clearing process, placing a multiple payee hold on a payor's bank/card account, creating transaction accounts, crediting and debiting the transaction accounts, facilitating the payor specifying the exact amount each payee or stakeholder will receive, facilitating the payor sending payment without specifying the amount each payee or stakeholder will receive, providing multiple payee check deposit via an automated teller machine (ATM), allowing ATMs to identify a multiple payee check for processing, processing a multiple payee check via an ATM, initiating a notification protocol, enabling multiple payee electronic check endorsement, facilitating electronic 3rd party payment in the form of "pay to" endorsements, identity verification or authentication, alerting payees that funds are available, enabling payee electronic endorsement/identity verification, receiving payee endorsement/confirmation of business or individual identity, receiving payee electronic check endorsements/confirmation of a business or individual identity, enabling availability of the endorsement file to the payor, providing payment forms to redirect payment from one payee to another, enabling document exchange relating to

*etc*. The database may be synchronized with an insurance carrier's database to provide real-time information upon request.

**[0018]** There is provided a system for facilitating electronic payment to multiple payees from a single electronic payment transaction and/or from a multiple payee check payment and associated methods and computer readable media containing computer readable instructions for performing such methods. In exemplary embodiments, the system is implemented in a cloud computing setting and includes a database storing payor and payee identity, address, and bank account information, a processor that executes instructions and communicates outputs to a payor and respective payees, and a memory that stores instructions for execution by the processor. When executed, the instructions cause the processor to perform the steps of initiating multiple payee payment and/or a multiple payee check handling and clearing process including determining identity of the payor and/or receiving the payor's check information; receiving identification of multiple payees; placing a hold on a payor's bank/card account and/or accepting multiple payee check deposit via an ATM; alerting respective payees that funds are available; enabling payee electronic check endorsement and/or identity verification for the respective payees; receiving electronic payee endorsement and confirmation of identity and providing an endorsement file to the payor for each payee; debiting the payor's account in respective amounts owed the respective payees; and disbursing the respective amounts to the respective payees through a payment network.

**[0019]** In other exemplary embodiments, the memory further stores instructions that when executed by the processor cause the processor to enable the payor to specify amounts to be paid to each payee and to distribute the specified amounts to each payee in the distributing step. The processor may also be instructed to enable one or more of the multiple payees to specify amounts to be paid to each payee and to redirect payment to each payee in accordance with the specified amounts.

**[0020]** In further exemplary embodiments, placing a hold on the payor's bank/card account comprises placing an account funds hold through the payor's payment / banking network in an amount of total payment to all payees and debiting the payor's account comprises debiting the payor's account in portions based on the amount to be disbursed to each payee. The processor may further be instructed to create a temporary transaction account from which the payor's funds are debited and to which a credit is made in the debiting step.

**[0021]** In the exemplary embodiments, alerting respective payees comprises simultaneously notifying the respective payees of payment availability via a communication