stratford notes

This month Microsoft will release the new version of Windows. It is called **Windows 95**. We shall be at the Moscone Center in San Francisco for the official introduction.

We have had many people ask us if our program will work with Windows 95. The answer is YES. Those people, of course, have not had access to any of our previous newsletters. Refer to the February issue where we list our hardware recommendations. We got our copy of the *final beta* in March 1995. We reported in the April 95 newsletter that our present program worked perfectly in 32-bit mode on Windows 95. No changes of any kind are required. If you have the present Stratford program installed and working with Windows 3.1x, you will have nothing special to do at all.

Another question we are asked is: "will you make your software look like the other windows software that I see." The answer is yes. Our new "Windows 95 compliant" software should be available two to six months after Windows 95 is released. At this time we plan to offer existing customers a no (low) charge option of changing to the new program. (Just like we did the last time.) We have a list with several names now. If you are sure you want to change, let us know by fax: 415.692.1073. The new software will have a different file structure. We will have an automatic data conversion program available. Once you convert, you will not be able to go back to the current file structure. Customers who have created custom reports using a report generator may need to get an upgrade. We

You can find Stratford's Internet server at this address:
`http://www.stratfordsoftware.com/`

plan to have a "trial" version for existing customers who want it.

Let me review our suggested hardware requirements for Windows 95: We recommend that you have at least 8 megabytes of memory. We recommend that you have at least a "486" processor. The hard disk requirements are not significantly different from previous versions of Windows. These are simple upgrades for most "clone" computers sold in the past few years.

The new interface will require some time for you to become comfortable. Everything is completely different. Don't give up. Just work with it for a while. When you get more familiar with it, you will really like it. It is much more friendly than the "old Windows."

FROM THE EDI CORNER......

Blue Shield of California is making eligibility information available on their CABBS bulletin board. To receive the information you must be a participating physician and bill using ANSI 837 or National Standard Format. If you do not use one of the two formats, you should start now. Fax your request to 415.692.1073 and we will set you up. If you use Stratford software you now have access to the bulletin board. You must have a modem and a phone line, of course. We may not be able to help you get your modem working properly. Many times an on-site visit by a hardware technician is required. Helping you with your modem and other hardware is not included in our software support charges.

WPS is the Medicare contractor for Wisconsin. They have announced the availability of beneficiary eligibility information using the HCFA-developed National Standard format. This format will be used by all Medicare carriers to receive eligibility requests and send eligibility responses in a batch mode.

To qualify for this this service, the provider must:
- be a participating provider
- submit claims electronically in the National Standard Format (NSF) or the ANSI 837 transaction set.
- request the information via BBS
- have a claim to query ratio that does not exceed 95 percent. This means that for every 100 inquiries submitted, there must have been at least 95 claims submitted the previous month.
- send a maximum of 99 inquiries per transmission.•

MANAGED CARE BILLING

Many of the managed care companies will soon begin requiring the "rendering provider" ID number when submitting claims. None of our clients have a problem and no software updates or different data entry is required. Our software has been capturing this information since 1976. Stratford uses the provider code that you enter on each transaction line. We have the code on every transaction so our software can automatically split claims and transmit everything with the proper ID. Solo practitioners may have this code disabled. If so, the software will default to the correct ID. This mechanism allows the software to have multiple PIN numbers for a single provider. Multiple office sites can be billed in the same accounts receivable by the same billing person. If you are billing with the ANSI 837 or the National Standard Format program, you are already billing correctly. The requirement takes effect October 2, 1995. Claims submitted without this information after January 2, 1996, will be returned unprocessed.•

EDI "per-claim" charges
Stratford does not have any "per-claim" or other charges related to transmitting claims to Medicare or any other carrier. We only charge (optional) for providing software support.

USER SURVEY

Do you take Mastercard and/or Visa in your practice? Would you be interested in a software link from the Stratford program to a VeriFone machine? •

UPGRADING DISK STORAGE

We have received some questions from clients who are upgrading their hard disk to get more storage. They were told that DOS could handle a maximum of 500 megabytes and so Windows 3.11 has the same restriction. This is true. DOS and Windows 3.11 use the "FAT" file system. Of course, there are ways around it such as changing the hard disk controller. An example is the Relialogic XL505 controller. This really does not get rid of the restriction but it accomplishes the same thing. "VFAT", the Windows 95 file system, will allow about 2 gigabytes. This will be sufficient for many years for most people. OS/2 uses the "HPFS" file system and allows 2 terabytes. Windows NT uses the "NTFS" file system and allows 68 billion terabytes. (One for each star in the galaxy for you star trek fans.) There are considerations other than storage size when you change file systems. •

STRATFORD'S INTERNET SERVER

We now have our Internet server running. We will soon have a "home page". We will have as many other healthcare sites listed as possible. We want to make our server the first place you go when you are looking for healthcare information on the Internet. We have a fairly complete list of anesthesiology locations now. The anesthesiologists in Australia are very

active on the Internet. When everything is working, you will be able to find a location of interest, click on it and instantly you will be transferred to that location. •

MAINFRAME INSIDE A PC

IBM announced a single board mainframe that goes inside a PC. It is going to be delivered in a product called PC Server 500 System/390. The box is a 90-MHz Pentium processor with a P/390 CMOS based S/390 board. The Pentium will run a PC operating system like OS/2 and the P/390 will run MVS, VM or VSE mainframe operating systems. The P/390 board comes with 32M of memory, expandable to 128M bytes. The new computer is aimed at present users of S/370 mainframe applications. Prices range from $50,000 to $90,000. If you have been wanting a mainframe, here is a low cost way to get one.•
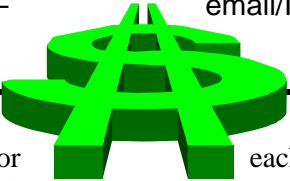
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

1   Email requests for support get Priority Service.

2   If you send an Email or fax with a description of the problem, your call is given priority over other Emails and faxes.

3   Do not call more than one time. The second call places your first call at the bottom of our callback list.

We can receive many support requests in the first few hours each day. It usually is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call. If you just call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the callback list. We must do everything we can to avoid "phone-tag". Hand-written faxes can be almost impossible to read, so please type them whenever possible. Include the best time to call you.
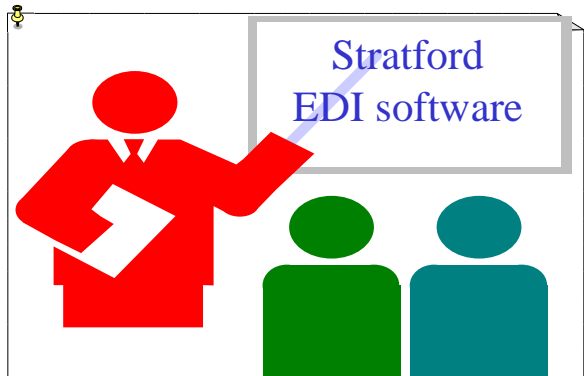
At this time we can deliver support best by email. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than faxing us. We check our email constantly — at least every 5 minutes. We are putting most of our resources into email and other methods that utilize the Internet. If you have an ICQ number, we can support it. Let us know.

We are interested in hearing from people who would like to receive support by Internet —   email/ICQ, etc.

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Stratford   will pay you $100 for   each person* you refer who   purchases Stratford Software at full price ($895). Simply fax or write to give us your referral. **We must receive the referral notice in advance of the sale**. **We cannot pay for a referral if you notify us after the sale.**
*Subject to restrictions

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ADVANCED TIP OF THE MONTH

If you send your claims electronically on a phone line that has the "call waiting" feature, it can interrupt your transmission. The problem is very difficult to diagnose because the transmission will work most of the time. When it does fail, you are forced to re-send your claims. Call waiting can be temporarily disabled. The code for Pacific Bell customers is ***70**. To use this code you add it to the number that the computer dials. This number is in your M6P9xx.DAT files. The files are usually found in your 130\4 path. Call technical support if you have any questions about how to do this. For non-Pacific Bell customers, please contact your phone company first to determine the code that will temporarily disable "call waiting". After the transmission is finished and your modem "hangs-up", the call waiting feature is automatically enabled.