STRATFORD

stratford notes

*T*his year is the 20th anniversary of Stratford's software. The company name was different then and our main business was providing billing services. Computers were too expensive for any but the largest groups of providers and clinics. Many hospitals were not computerized at that time.

At first the Stratford software was available only on very expensive minicomputers with the old outdated unix type operating system.

Now it is available on low-cost PCs that have many times the power of the old minicomputers. The present software will run in both 16-bit mode and 32-bit mode depending on the amount of available memory.

This year we will be rewriting and compiling the software again. The next version will run in 32-bit mode only and require at least a 486 processor and 8 megabytes of memory. The next version will require Windows 95 or Window NT or a successor operating system. The next version probably will not run on the older versions of Windows and definitely will not run on DOS. It will look like all the other Windows programs.

If you are interested in being a "beta" site, please let us know by fax: (415) 692 1073. We are designing it so that you can try it and still keep using the present version until you are sure you are ready to

You can find Stratford's Internet server at this address:

change. Once you change, you may not go back unless you restore your old files from a backup. •

We are still offering a *Free* homepage on the Internet to all licensed Stratford users and dealers. See inside for details.

We have homepages now for some of our clients and dealers. If you are interested in having a homepage for yourself or your group, please let us know by fax or email only. Send the fax to (415) 692 1073 and the email to

`homepage@stratfordsoftware.com`

Send the text that you want on the homepage. You will need some way to look at the homepage so you can tell us if it is acceptable. •

FROM THE EDI CORNER......

HCFA has mandated that all of the Medicare contractors standardize their paper *remittance notices*. They must begin using the *X12 ANSI "reason codes"* and messages that are used in the EDI transmissions. In fact, HCFA has mandated that the paper remittance may not contain any information that is not available on electronic remittances. If you receive your remittance advice electronically, you will no longer receive it in the mail. The electronic remittance notices will include unassigned claim information. These codes and their meaning are in your Medicare bulletin. We have had these codes built into the present Stratford program since December of 1993. We will be updating these codes as we receive notices from Medicare. We do not believe the changes will be necessary for all customers until July 1, 1996. We will try to have everyone who subscribes to our software maintenance updated before that date.

This is just one more step towards standardization

of all paper and EDI claims processing. These changes are mandatory. Those of you who read this section of the newsletter every month know that we have been saying that this would happen.

For 2 years we have been using the ANSI format for all customers whenever possible. We are convinced that this format (or its successor) will eventually replace all other formats.

Blue Shield of California Medicare uses a bulletin board called CABBS for receiving claims electronically. CABBS can now be called directly without going through Compuserve. If you are interested in changing please fax to us at (415) 692 1073. Please do not call the 800 support desk. They cannot help you change over at this time. You will require a new file and it must be designed for your practice. If you do not use Procomm Plus for transmitting, we will not be able to convert you with our script.

Transamerica Medicare is requiring several changes for all Southern California submitters beginning January 1, 1996. We have those changes available and we have sent them to the customers that we know bill to Transamerica. If you transmit to Transamerica and you did not receive an update from Stratford in November or December of 1995, please let us know as soon as possible. If you received the update, be sure to load it before you transmit. If you transmit without this update, your claims will probably be rejected.

If you are not yet transmitting your private, Medicare and Medicaid claims, now is the time to begin. All Stratford users with the current program have the software necessary to bill electronically to all insurance carriers who can accept claims electronically. •

INTERNET CORNER

We are still offering a free homepage to our licensed users and dealers. If you are interested, please send us an email. All homepages are subject to some restrictions and we reserve the right to eliminate the offer at any time without notice.

If you have access to the Internet and you have not seen the Stratford web site, you should check it out the next time you are "surfing the net". We are listed several ways in Yahoo.com. We have already had thousands of "hits" on our server and we have documented sales from the site. We have even done a limited amount of customer support using our web site. We are not recommending it at this time since we only check the mail one or two times per day. Eventually we will have "real time" mail delivery. At that time, it will be just as effective as the fax.

We have our Microsoft "backoffice" test platform running. It will be the basis for our Internet server. •

EDI FOR PRIVATE CARRIERS

We have many customers who have been set up for a clearinghouse for private carriers, but they have not started transmitting.

The only reason we have heard for not transmitting is: "I don't have time to enter all those payer ID codes". If you have another reason, please let us know by fax at: (415) 692 1073.

Stratford is known for having the best and simplest EDI program. We want to

maintain that reputation.

We suggest that you do not enter all the codes. Just enter codes for the companies that cover a lot of your patients. Transmit those claims. The claims for companies with no payer IDs entered will not be transmitted and will still be in the "paper" file. You can print or look at the remaining paper claims. If there are a lot of claims for some other carriers, enter the payer IDs for those companies and retransmit. The transmission program will look again at the paper claims and pull out the ones for carriers with payer IDs. Keep doing that each month and eventually you will not have any paper claims.

Most of our customers now bill Medicare electronically. To bill the private carriers is just as easy (it is exactly the same) once you have entered the payer IDs. •

SOFTWARE SUPPORT UPDATE

We are now nearly one year into our expanded software support project. Everything is relatively stable. The Atlanta, Georgia group is now taking a larger percentage of the calls. We are getting an extensive amount of data regarding individual client calling patterns. This will enable us to eventually charge each client an amount that covers the amount of support actually being used.

As of December 18, 1995 our numbers indicate the following averages for a 90 day period (not per month!):

- number of Stratford calls per client: 5.02
- number of "800" calls per client: 1.78

These numbers are lower than reported several months ago. Those clients using significantly more support than the average will receive a notice of a change in their rate for the next billing period. We are tracking the usage over a 90 day "window" so that a major problem in one month will not change the monthly rate.

Fax is the best way to get support for problems related to EDI which the regular "800" support line cannot handle: (415) 692 1073. •

STRATFORD CERTIFIED TRAINERS

Do you think you are an expert user of Stratford software? Are you an expert at billing? Would you be interested in earning some extra money? You could train new users and/or give classes.

Our sales volume is increasing at an alarming rate (that's good)

Stratford will pay you $100 for each person* you refer who purchases Stratford Software at full price ($895). Simply call or write to give us your referral. We will take care of the rest!

Stratford EDI software
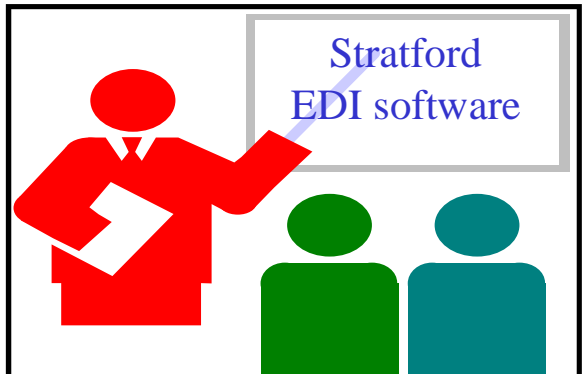
ADVANCED TIP OF THE MONTH

Priority support service: The fastest way to get support for most problems is to call the 800 number. Except for about one hour on Friday afternoon, there will be a trained support technician available to answer your call.

If your problem is related to electronic claims or hardware, you may need to contact the Burlingame office by fax. **If you send a fax with a description of the problem, your call is given priority over other calls**. If you call and leave a message, your call is placed at the bottom of the call-back list. We must do everything we can to avoid "phone-tag" so that we may help the maximum number of people per day. **Do not call more than one time. The second call places your first call at the bottom of the call back list. •**

Stratford Newsletter
Copyright 1996, all rights reserved

Stratford Healthcare Systems, Inc.
840 Mitten Road
Burlingame, CA 94010-1304
Phone (650) 692-7970
Fax (650) 692-1073
Prepaid Support Only (800) 554-6020

Internet **mail@stratfordsoftware.com**
*http://***www.stratfordsoftware.com/**

New Software Sales Only (800) 274-4594