STRATFORD

stratford notes

***B**lue Shield will no longer be the Medicare payer for Northern California. We are not sure who will get the contract. If it is Aetna (presently the contractor in other states) or the Texas Medicare payer, Stratford customers do not need to worry since we have customers in those states and our EDI program is accepted by them.

You do not need to contact us. If updates or changes are necessary we will send out updates. It is important that you look at your monthly statement. Be sure that we have you listed as transmitting to Medicare. Your statement should list an item like this:

MAY EDI ANSI NO CA BS MCA

If you do not see an item listed like this, please contact us by fax so we can research it. If we do not have you listed, you may not get the update you need. •

***D**o you accept credit cards for payment in your practice? Licensed Stratford customers can be approved to accept credit cards at a discount rate less than 2% for Mastercard and Visa. This is much lower than any other rate we have been quoted. Discover and American Express may be higher. Here is the way it works. You get an application from Stratford. You fill out the application and send it in. When your patient pays by credit card, the payment is posted directly to your bank account the same day or next business day.

If there is enough interest, we will integrate a transmission program with the Stratford software so you will not need to rent or buy a machine. The program will require you to have Microsoft Windows. You will need a mag-stripe reader and a small printer. We cannot make this work for you unless you are currently transmitting claims electronically. We will use the same setup for transmitting credit card requests and receiving authorization numbers. If you want more specific information please send us a fax. Please do not call. We will fax the details back to you. •

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

VISA

MasterCard

FROM THE EDI CORNER......

After last month's newsletter we received several requests for more information about the ANSI standard formats. Here are some of the ANSI X.12 formats (transaction sets):

Several people wanted to know if we were going to support all the healthcare related

Set Name	Type of Information
148	report worker's compensation claims to companies and state agencies
186	laboratory test reporting
257/258	on-line eligibility inquiry
270/271	eligibility and benefits
274/275	provider's patient data
276/277	claim status
278/279	healthcare services review, managed care data
834	update employee benefit data
835	EOB (remittance advice & pmt)
837	claims data
997	acknowledgment

formats. The answer is, of course, we plan to support them if the payers support them. Our specialty is EDI and the primary EDI formats are from ANSI. ANSI has accepted version 2.2 of HL7 as a standard for exchanging clinical information. We certainly expect to support this. Microsoft has most of the HL7 format enabled in OCXs and they are supporting it. •

BLUE CROSS BEGINS CHARGING FOR PAPER CLAIMS

It finally happened. We received written notice that a payer would begin charging for processing paper claims. We have been predicting it for years. We believe all payers will begin charging soon. It costs them much more to process a paper claim so it is no surprise that they have decided to make it less expensive for the providers to transmit. When Medicare finally gets all transmitted claims in a standard format, after July 1, 1996, you can expect a similar announcement from them. If you do not transmit a claim that can be transmitted, you will probably find that it will no longer be processed in the near future. •

AMBULANCE CLAIM TRIP REPORTS

Documentation in support of ambulance services should include the **trip number**. You must have this information for a potential post-payment review. •

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 supporting

SAFIER CUSTOMERS

As you know, Safier is no longer providing claims transmitting software. Safier was a premier Medicare "SELECT" Certified vendor like Stratford. They provided an excellent product and have many satisfied customers.

Stratford has a low cost option for all licensed users and dealers of Safier software. If you are interested, please contact your dealer or Stratford directly. Stratford will automatically convert a Safier dealer into a Stratford dealer at no charge.

The Medicare payer for Northern California will change soon. There may be required changes in the transmission procedures. This is your opportunity to convert at low cost and be guaranteed support.

We believe that this transition makes Stratford the only Medicare "SELECT" Certified software vendor with a stand-alone software package in Northern California.

We know of several other vendors who are getting out of the healthcare billing business. If your vendor is quitting, let us know. We will make you a deal you cannot resist. We have purchasing plans as low as zero cost for groups.

Stratford has conversion programs for most software packages such as DOMS, Medisoft and Medical Manager. The conversion may be free depending on any labor involved.

Stratford will run your Stratford software related classified ad in our monthly newsletter *free*, upon SHS approval!

JOB OPENINGS AT STRATFORD

If you are employed by a Stratford competitor that is going out of business, Stratford has job openings now and we are anxious to talk to you.

If you believe you have the necessary qualifications for customer support and or healthcare software programming, please contact us.

Please send your resume by fax to (415) 692-1073 or by email to:

SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

We have customers who say "I only called because the software did not work properly". This is possible. An update may not work exactly the way you want. We may need to make changes for you. These changes are part of your support. The calls you make may cause your support fee to be raised. You may pay more for a few months. For $895.00 you cannot get a package custom taylored to your practice. The Stratford software is a general purpose healthcare billing program with integrated EDI. It should work for many types of healthcare billing without modification. We cannot guarantee that you will be able to use the software "out of the box" with no changes. If you consider all the costs of using Stratford software, you will find that it is much less expensive than any other comparable software package.

As of May 20, 1996 more than 50% of our customers called 6 times (or less) and were charged the minimum support fee. This is for the period beginning 01/01/96 **(not per month!)** We are creating a profile so that each client will pay an amount that covers the amount of support actually being used.

We track each client's support usage over a 120+ day "window" so that a problem in one month should not change the monthly rate. Those clients using significantly more support than the average will receive a notice of a change in their rate for the next billing period. The software monthly fee will be raised or lowered in $21.50 increments each month until the correct amount is reached. •

Stratford
EDI software

ADVANCED TIP OF THE MONTH

Priority support service: The fastest way to get support is by fax. It is possible for us to receive more than 100 calls within the first 15 minutes after we open in the morning. It is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call at the current monthly support fee.

If you send a fax with a description of the problem, your call is given priority over other calls. If you call and leave the message "please call", 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 in the minimum amount of time.

Do not call more than one time. The second call places your first call at