

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Management Software

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stratford notes

Medicare is in the process of standardizing all their claims processing. Last month we had an article about NPI/NPS. This month we have more information. There will also be a new numbering system for all healthcare claim payers. These changes along with the recent change in electronic claims format requirements will make most healthcare billing software obsolete.

The new codes will necessitate several database file changes. As soon as we finalize these changes and test the updated program, we will begin shipping updates. We should have no problem meeting the January 1, 1997 deadline. All licensed users who take software support will receive an update automatically. Our preliminary testing has revealed that some of our user's computers do not have enough memory to run the updated program. The updated program will open several more files and will generally be a larger program. To run the updated program you must be in "extended" mode. This means that a "286" processor will not work. It means that you need at least 4 megabytes of memory. You must have a memory manager in your operating system that allows the Stratford program to run in a true 32-bit mode. This is not a new feature of the Stratford software. We first incorporated this mode into our software in 1993. Up until now it has been an option. Our software could detect whether you had sufficient memory and if you did not, it would automatically run in a "slow" mode. Last year we put a notice

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Stratford now has more than 2,900 licensed users

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

in our software that warned you if your computer had insufficient memory to enable many of the features of the Stratford software. If you have not seen that warning, you will probably not have any problem running the updated program. This month we are enclosing a picture of the screen with this newsletter. If you have 3 little yellow hash marks in the left-center of the screen you are running in a true 32-bit mode and you can run the updated program with no problems. If you have a network, you need to check all the workstations. If your computer is not running in 32-bit mode, you should fax us immediately at (415) 692 1073. If we do not hear from you, we will assume that you can load the updated program. You may be required to add memory to your computer. You should not wait until January when Medicare will require the changes that are incorporated in the updated program. Memory is

Training Classes
SHS Software Basic Training

In the Stratford Classroom:

Every Friday	9:30 AM -12:00 PM	\$165
	1:30 PM - 4:00 PM	\$165
By Appointment		\$165

Call for class availability at least three days in advance.
On-site training with a certified Stratford trainer may be available (*by appointment only*). The cost is \$250.
Telephone training is available (*by appointment only*).

FROM THE EDI CORNER.....

HCFA has mandated that all Medicare contractors are required to allow provider/vendor access using the TCP/IP telecommunication standard effective October 15, 1996. TCP/IP is the protocol used by the Internet. This does not necessarily mean that you can send claims over the Internet (yet) but it is a big step forward. We have had articles in the past regarding this. The big problem at this time is security. Microsoft Windows 95 and NT now have TCP/IP as the default protocol for networking. •

NPI/NPS

This is continued from last month. (National Provider Identifier/National Provider System) HCFA is assigning a unique number to all healthcare providers. This number will replace PIN and UPIN numbers as well as all other identification numbers used in government health care programs. The number will also be used for billing. The number will be used by private sector insurers and state Medicaid agencies.

In a recent bulletin from MetraHealth they state that these new ID numbers may be

used beginning 1/1/97 with a grace period until 4/1/97. Stratford has not yet received a copy of these numbers or any other official listing. We have already designed the data entry for this code into our software, but we cannot do the final coding. If you receive an actual listing of the codes, we would appreciate your sending us a fax at (415) 692 1073. •

**CLAIMS SENT BY FAX OR
DISKETTE OR TOUCH TONE
PHONE**

Do you send your claims by any of these methods? Beginning October 1, 1998 none of these methods will be paid as Electronic Media Claims. In other words, you will not be paid early. You will be paid the same as paper claims. This date is two years away, but as you know, time passes quickly. This is another advance warning. Now is the time to begin electronic billing if you haven't already. Remember, if you have Stratford software, you have the software you need to do electronic billing. •

1997 ICD-9-CM CODES

Medicare will accept updated 1997 ICD-9-CM codes for claims received on or after October 1, 1996. These codes are required for claims received on or after Jan 1, 1997. Stratford has a utility program available which will load the codes from the AMA if you purchase them on floppy disk. We also have a utility program available to load the CPT codes. There may be a minimal charge for the diskette, labor and shipping. •

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 you while you are using the Stratford

PAYERID

This 8 digit ID will be the beginning of the end of the nuisance of billing your secondary insurances. There will now be no reason why the primary payer cannot simply "crossover" the claim to the supplementary payer automatically. Medigap payers will have a "99" in the 7th and 8th positions.

This ID is for payers like the NPI/NPS is for providers. For those of you who bill electronically to several clearinghouses, you know that the lookup codes are a mess. All clearinghouses have a different system. We have no control over the clearinghouse, but we plan to change our internal lookup codes to the new HCFA mandated code which will be assigned to every payer of healthcare claims. This includes all payers *without exception*. All payers will be registered and numbered beginning in the fall of 1996. HCFA will keep this PAYERID in a database with the payer name, billing address and other business information such as contact person and electronic routing addresses. If we can distribute this information without paying royalties, we will make it available to all licensed Stratford users. You may want to replace your present insurance file with this new database. Imagine, you will never need to enter another insurance company name and address. Imagine, you will never need to enter all those "dumb" codes just so you can bill electronically to a new payer in your database.

For Medicare claims, you should begin using this number on January 1, 1997.

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



Beginning on April 1, 1997, any claim that is submitted without the PAYERID will be rejected.

The PAYERID goes on the claim form where you formerly put the insurer name.
Fields 9d and 11 on the HCFA 1500
Fields 5 and 6 on the UB92
Form locator 50 A-B and C on the UB92.

As usual, if you bill electronically, Stratford will make sure the code is put in the proper place in the electronic transmission file. It will be up to you to place the correct code in the insurance record, but then the Stratford program will do the rest. See, this is one more reason why you should be billing electronically.

Health is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.

SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

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 without charging you considerably more than we do now.

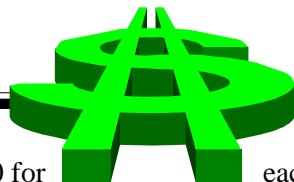
If you send a fax with a description of the problem, your call is given priority over other calls.

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.

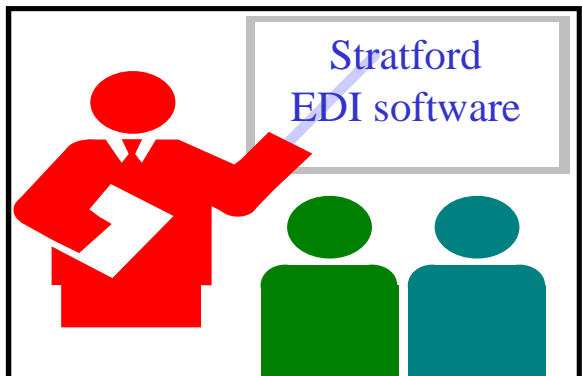
Do not call more than one time. The second call places your first call at the bottom of the call back list.

At this time we can deliver support by email. This is not very good support if you need a quick answer. The reason is that we get very few support email messages. Many days we do not get any. For this reason we only check the mail once or twice each day. As the volume increases, we will put more resources into email.

We are interested in hearing from people who would like to receive support by email. •



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



ADVANCED TIP OF THE MONTH

Have you ever started to balance a batch of transactions only to get a red screen with a message stating that your accounts receivable was out of balance?

Read the message closely and it will tell you what you must do. It says: Audit the system balances. This is a simple procedure. Go to the main directory and select "8 File and System management". Then select "3 Reorganization your data files". Then select "2 Audit the system balances". This program will total the transactions for each patient and make any necessary corrections. It will leave you an audit if it finds any problems.

The most common reason for this error is resetting the computer without first

Stratford Newsletter

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