

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Management Software

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stratford notes

Congress passed healthcare reform legislation in August 1996. A little publicized provision of this legislation requires payers to be capable of handling claims and related transactions in a standard format by the year 2000. This is an amendment to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. As part of this bill, congress is supposed to pass privacy legislation. If congress does not pass privacy legislation within three years, the law authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to impose a national policy by regulation.

Payers who fail to comply with the requirements face significant fines.

The timing of this legislation coincides with the new Medicare Transaction System (MTS) which is scheduled to be fully operational by late 1999.

We believe this will result in all payers being required to accept the ANSI 837 format for claims and other ANSI X.12 formats for related transactions. The reason is that the legislation requires the Secretary of Health to use the standards developed by ANSI-accredited organizations. At this time the ANSI 837 is the only format approved by the ANSI committee for transmitting claims. The ANSI 837 can be used for all types of claims including physicians, dentists, and institutions.

This is very good for Stratford users since Stratford has more experience in ANSI

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X.12 transactions sets than any other healthcare software vendor. We have consistently been first, or one of the first to have our software approved by payers. Because of this experience, it is very easy for us to update our software for any new requirements. A good example is the coming requirement for two new codes. We have already modified our software. Previous newsletters have had information regarding the NPI/NPS and PAYERID codes.

All customers who have purchased new software from Stratford since 1994 have been set up to use the ANSI formats in all cases where the payer will accept it. Stratford users can transmit to Medicare in all states, using the ANSI format. Stratford users can also transmit to Private carriers by going through NEIC using the ANSI format. Dental users in California can transmit directly to the Delta Dental "Denti-Cal" program using ANSI. •

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

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.....

By the end of 1996, Canada will require all providers to submit fee-for-service claims electronically. Beginning in December there will be a \$.25 per-line charge for any paper claims. All claims are deposited into a database which can be analyzed by accredited researchers.

Australia will subsidize a practice \$500 for EDI software. •

ICD-10-PCS

This coding structure will replace the ICD-9-CM codes currently used by HCFA. This is a seven-character code. The new coding system should be in place by the year 2000

This new code is longer than the current ICD-9 codes. This will require the diagnosis database on your computer to be changed. There will be a conversion for the ICD-9 codes. If we can distribute this without paying royalties, we will do it.

If you have been reading this newsletter over the past year, you are aware that the entire claims submission process is being standardized. This is good, of course, but

it means that all software now being used will be obsolete. This is one more reason why you want to use Stratford software. We will keep the software updated for you so you have the tools you need to bill correctly. •

WIN95 INSTALLATION

Do you have Windows 95? Have you been wishing we would send our updates using a "Windows 95 compliant" installer? Well, we have one now. Our installer looks like Microsoft Office and other programs you may have loaded on your computer. If you have Windows 95 and you are not sure if we have your account set up to receive Win95 updates, please fax us at (415) 692 1073. Please request that all future updates be sent in Windows 95 format. This will save you some typing and confusing reading. The new installer will automatically examine your computer and install itself correctly. The installer is aware of networks also. •

MY EMAIL AND BROWSER STOPPED WORKING

Do you surf the net? Have you wanted to try the new Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.0? If you do, your present setup may stop working. You may need to set up the DNS. Select dial-up networking. Select the phonebook entry. Select "More". Select the "Server" tab. Select TCP/IP Settings. Check "Specify name server addresses". Enter the DNS numbers from the list that your internet provider gave you. •

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

REMOTE CONTROL

We discussed remote control in a previous newsletter. We get a lot of questions from our dealers and customers and hopefully we can answer them. This is an update and discussion of our experience with Windows 95 programs. An example of "remote control" is using a computer that you have at home to connect with and control a computer that you have at the office. Why would you do this? There are several reasons.

Maybe you received a call from a patient and you want to call the office and lookup the patient's account to see when he/she was last in the office. If you practice in a group, maybe you want to see which doctor last saw the patient. Also, even though the Stratford program is an accounts receivable management system, it has a great deal of clinical information because of insurance billing. Every visit has at least one and as many as four diagnosis codes for each transaction. There can be many transactions per visit. Every visit has at least one procedure code. There can be many procedure codes per visit. Also, there are many "note pads" available in the Stratford program where you can record non-billing information. You can also check the patient's payment status.

Maybe you want to check your schedule. By having your schedule on the main office computer, it can be maintained throughout the day by the office staff. If you call in from home, you can add and

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



change appointments.

You may have other programs on the office computer like word-processing that you like to use.

Remote control is perfect. You can call in with a "286" or a "386" and get a response almost equal to being at the office in front of the "host" computer.

We have not found a program that works exactly as you would expect with Windows 95. For Windows 3.x we recommend Close-Up 6.0. For Windows 95, you must get version 6.5. The only way we can get this version to work is to run it from a "dos" window. It should load before Windows 95 so you can control the GUI windows. We have not been able to get this to work.

Other programs we have tried are PC Anywhere 32, Remotely Possible and Lap Link. We continue to experiment with these programs since most of our customers are moving to Windows 95 as they upgrade their hardware. We will print another article when we find a program we can recommend for Windows

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 much more than we now do.

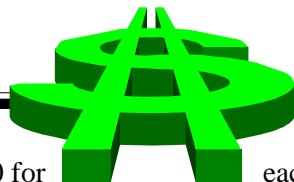
If you send a fax with a description of the problem, your call is given priority over other calls.

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.

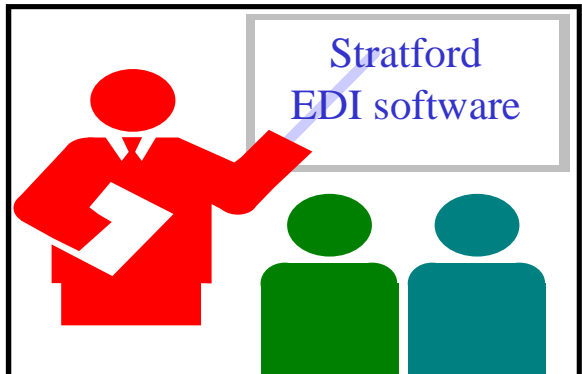
Do not call more than one time. The second call places your first call at the bottom of the call back list.

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. 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

After you run the reorganization program you may see a purple box on your screen telling you that "before you can enter transactions, you must first print or rename the audr1382.lst file." You may also get the same message but the name of the file may be auds1382.lst.

In order to clear this message you should go to the main menu and choose number 1, "Finished with the accounts receivable." You will see number "8" highlighted. If you select number 8 you will see either one or both of the above files in a window. You should print or view them. These audit files will tell you if the program has either adjusted the number of transactions or an account balance. If any adjustments are made, the affected account number

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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