

STRATFORD

Volume 21.01

Healthcare EDI and Management Software

January 1997

stratford notes

The Stratford program is 21 years old this year. We still have most of the original 100 customers. We appreciate their business. We are planning a special surprise for the people who stay with us 25 years. More on that later.

Many people like our new statement format. We got some questions that I will try to answer here, in case other people wondered about it.

No, blank statement forms are not available at this time because the statements must go through a pre-processor before they are usable with the new form. This is because of the laser fonts that are used. If a large number of customers like the new form but still want to print their own, we can offer it.

The charge for postage, printing, folding, stuffing, inside and outside envelopes and a one page statement is 64 cents. It would be very difficult for you to do it for that cost. Remember the cost of shipping and stocking forms, printer wear and tear, labor, etc.

We expected only the larger group practices to be interested in the backup service but many solo practices have responded. This service is available to any Stratford customer, anywhere in the US, 365 days per year, 24 hrs per day. You can backup as often as daily. We will maintain 2 full copies of your data in different locations in the event a disaster strikes your office and our office on the same day. The replication service requires

inside this issue

- *Stratford Notes*
- ▷ *This is our 21st year*
- ▷ *New statement format/Backup Service*
- *From the EDI (ECS) corner*
- *Blue Cross EDI*
- *ICD-9-CM Codes*
- *Procedure/Diagnosis Relationship Listing*
- *Rejected Claims - Resubmission Problems*
- *Participating? Individual/Group*
- *Software Support Notes*
- *Advanced Tip of the Month*

Stratford now has 3000 licensed users

Windows 95 on the computer that will be used. You must have a modem to transmit the data to Stratford. If you have a network, this can be one of the workstations. If you want the backup to be fully automatic, you must also have a scheduling program which we can supply and install for less than \$100. If you lose your data because of fire, theft or something else, we can put a copy of your data on a plane at SFO (about 1/2 mile from us) and have it in any major city in the USA in a few hours. There is a \$300/mo minimum for the service at this time. The minimum will probably be lowered as more people begin using the service. Our replication program can be programmed to backup your data every night at a specific time. It can also do your processing and electronic claims at night. It can also "defrag" your disk and run scandisk automatically. •

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.....

Have you signed your new EDI form for transmitting Medicare claims? The new form must have been on file by December 1, 1996 or your claims will be rejected. This form must be signed by all providers, suppliers, or PA groups. Only original signatures are processed. A group only needs to sign one form regardless of the number of members of the group. If you get a rejection because of this form, please contact your Medicare representative to find out. Stratford support will not be able to help you with this form. •

BLUE CROSS EDI

Stratford customers can now transmit directly to Blue Cross of California. As you know, you will be charged for each paper claim you send after January 1, 1997. We announced this many months ago. If you are still printing those claims on paper, now is a good time to start transmitting.

While you are being set up for Blue Cross, we can create the necessary template files so you can transmit all your claims to all payers who will accept claims

electronically. •

ICD-9-CM CODES

Medicare Part B will only accept a diagnosis from the current ICD-9-CM coding manual. The diagnosis must be coded to the highest level of specificity; if there is a fourth or fifth digit available, they must be used. If there is no fourth or fifth digit, do not add zeros.

Do not use the DSM (*American Psychiatric Association's Manual of Mental Disorders*) to code a diagnosis for claims that will be sent to Medicare Part B.

Claims not coded to the highest level of specificity will be returned as unprocessable. •

**PROCEDURE/DIAGNOSIS
RELATIONSHIP LISTING**

The file that Medicare uses to determine coverage for procedures subject to diagnosis criteria is now available for purchase. This listing is designed to assist providers by outlining coverage guidelines in order to limit their financial liability for services affected by diagnosis criteria. It is not intended to serve as a tool to maximize payment for services which would otherwise be denied due to a lack of medical necessity. To use it this way will be considered fraudulent activity. •

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

REJECTED CLAIMS RESUBMISSION PROBLEMS

A technical requirement of all Medicare Carriers is that they have a front-end technique to detect duplicate claims. Generally it works like this. Each transmitted batch is checked for:

1. total number of claims
2. total dollar amount
3. first claim in batch is checked for
 - ⇒ patient account number
 - ⇒ date of service
 - ⇒ procedure code

What this means is that if you have an entire batch rejected for some reason, you cannot necessarily make a few changes and resubmit the batch. You may need to re-demand the claims to be sure that the first claim is for a different patient. Also you may want to make two transmissions so that the total count and dollar amount is not the same.

If you use the editing that is standard with Stratford software, this should not be a problem. The errors that cause an entire batch to be rejected will be stopped before transmission.

This is the second in a series of articles directed toward those people who have disabled the editing functions in Stratford software. Your claims may be paid with errors a little longer but the day is not far away when you must get all the data "clean" prior to transmission. •

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



MEDICARE PARTICIPATING? INDIVIDUAL/GROUP

If you have multiple offices and you are in an individual practice you must participate at all sites or none. In other words, the participation decision is made on your practicing provider number. This excludes group affiliations.

If you are now participating and you decide to form a group, your group will not be participating until a separate agreement is signed. The group participating agreement binds all members of the group when performing services and billing under the group's provider number. Only one contract is required of a group regardless of the number of members.

If you are now a member of a group that is participating and you decide to open an individual practice, you will not necessarily be participating in the private practice. It will depend on your status before you became a member of the group. If you have never signed an individual participating agreement, then you cannot be participating. •

SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

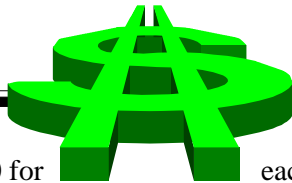
1. Faxed requests for support get Priority service.
2. If you send a fax with a description of the problem, your call is given priority over other calls.
3. Do not call more than one time. The second call places your first call at the bottom of the call back list.

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.

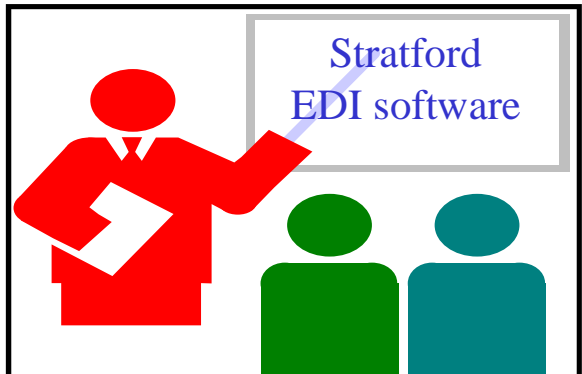
If you call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the call-back list. We must do everything we can to avoid "phone-tag" so that we may help the maximum number of people in the minimum amount of time.

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 two or three times 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

In the past six months we have discovered more than 10 customers who do not create regular backups. This is unacceptable. If your computer is stolen, we can help you set up a new one. We have many copies of our software. No one in the world has a copy of your data except you. Stratford does not have a copy. There is no way that we can help you replace your valuable data. You would be required to reenter all the data. This would be very bad for the moral of your office staff. It could cost you a great deal of money for labor and lost income. You may not be able to reconstruct all of your accounts receivable. You may send out statements for amounts which have been paid. Your office staff could receive many calls from unhappy patients. Please be sure you make

Stratford Newsletter

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