

STRATFORD

Volume 21.03

Healthcare EDI and Management Software

March 1997

stratford notes

In previous newsletters we have had articles about the changes in Medicare EDI that we believe are coming. Recently there have been several announcements that are important to Stratford customers. Last summer the contract for Northern California went to National Heritage Insurance. Then last fall, Aetna announced that it would not renew its Medicare contracts that cover 9 states.

Alabama Blue Cross Blue Shield will take over Aetna's Georgia contract.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota along with Transamerica Occidental will take over Aetna's 6 western states: Alaska, Arizona, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.

BCBS of North Dakota now processes Medicare part B claims for North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Colorado. Stratford's EDI software is now approved for transmission to BCBS of North Dakota.

Transamerica now processes claims for Southern California. Stratford's EDI software has been approved for transmission to Transamerica for more than ten years. None of Stratford's customers will have any problems with these changes.

None of these companies are new to the claims processing business. What is

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Stratford has nearly 3,100 licensed users

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

happening is a concentration of the processing into fewer companies. HCFA will eventually have four or fewer processing centers for the United States. There may be more than four companies doing the customer service.

Here at Stratford we are committed to keeping our EDI software in the forefront. We believe that we are ahead of all other software companies when it comes to ANSI X.12 transaction sets. We believe that all Healthcare payers will eventually require all claims to be submitted in this format. We have had heavy volume on our ANSI 837 software since early 1994.

At this time we are testing our software using TCP/IP and FTP with a Medicare payer. This is the way you will transmit your claims over the Internet someday. •

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.....

If you are interested in receiving **electronic remittance advice** (EOB) from Medicare, you can have it. All Medicare contractors in all states are supposed to offer it now. They will need to know some technical things about your software. This is the answer to their question:

You want to receive the remittance advice in **ANSI X.12 835, version 3051**.

Actually, we support all ANSI versions but this is the latest that most contractors have available so it is better to go with it than be required to change in the future.

If you now transmit your claims to Medicare using National Standard Format, you may need to change to ANSI. We can do that for you very easily. For most states, we can change you to ANSI without even re-testing. In some cases, you can be changed in one day. We can make the process work exactly like the National Standard Format so you do not need to learn any new office procedures. Your reports will look a little different but you will probably like them better. •

PAYERID INFORMATION

We have had several articles in the past regarding "PAYERID". This is not the Payerid that you enter into the Stratford system now. This is a new PAYERID. This one is from HCFA. Every payer will be assigned a unique PAYERID. Beginning April 1, 1997 you may/should use this on your Medicare insurance forms in lieu of printing the secondary/Medigap insurance company information. If you do not use the number, your claim may be processed but it probably will not be "crossed over". We believe that this PAYERID will replace the Medigap ID or OCNA (some payers have other names). If so, you will be able to replace the Medigap ID number with the PAYERID beginning on April 1, 1997. We are not absolutely certain that our software will handle everything as required since we have not yet seen the final rules. If you are still using paper claims, you must demand one and be sure that it looks correct before you submit it for payment. When we get the final rules, we will make any necessary changes and send out software updates to those customers who need them.

The "payerid" on our screen at this time is the code that a clearinghouse uses to identify the payers. Since this is exactly the same purpose as the PAYERID proposed by HCFA, we plan to use the new HCFA number for everything. Our software will then change the PAYERID into the code required by the various clearinghouses. •

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

PAPERLESS OFFICE

EDI (electronic claims): All Stratford users are aware that they have the software necessary to transmit claims to payers who accept claims electronically. This includes Medicare in all states and all of the larger healthcare payers. This is our specialty. It is one of the many features that makes our software better than other vendor's software.

EFT (electronic payment): You now have the option to have your payment from Medicare deposited directly to your bank account. The restrictions have been removed. You can be participating or non-participating. You can even have EFT if you submit paper claims. In fact you can now transmit claims electronically, and have a paper EOB mailed to you. This is an option that you will probably want because it means that the payment will be deposited directly to your bank account several days earlier than otherwise possible. It means your office will not be required to handle the check. It means the check cannot be "lost in the mail".

To take advantage of this you must fill out an EFT enrollment form. The form must have an original signature. You must attach a canceled/voided check and mail it to Medicare. The process will take approximately four weeks. Stratford cannot help you with this so please do not call us.

ERN (electronic EOB): If you want electronic remittance notification (ERN) rather than a paper EOB, it is available now from most Medicare contractors. You

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



can download the file. If your remittance is in ANSI 835 format, the Stratford program will automatically detect it and reformat it to be human readable.

ALL PAYER: Using Stratford software you can now transmit *ALL* of your claims. You can even transmit claims that are going to payers who do not accept electronic claims. This is truly an ALL PAYER system. How do you do it? You transmit the claims to a clearinghouse that prints the claim and mails it for you. There is a charge for the printing and postage, of course, but it may be less than you are now spending on labor in your office. This doesn't really eliminate any paper, but at least it isn't in your office. These claims are transmitted in the same file with the usual electronic claims. The clearinghouse will sort them out for you. Someday maybe all payers will accept claims electronically.

Stratford Electronic Statements (SES): You can transmit your statement file to Stratford for printing and mailing.

If you utilize EDI, EFT, ERN and SES you will have a paperless (almost) office. •

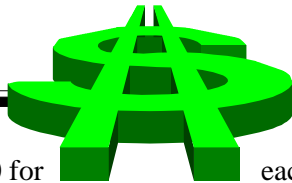
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

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 callback list.

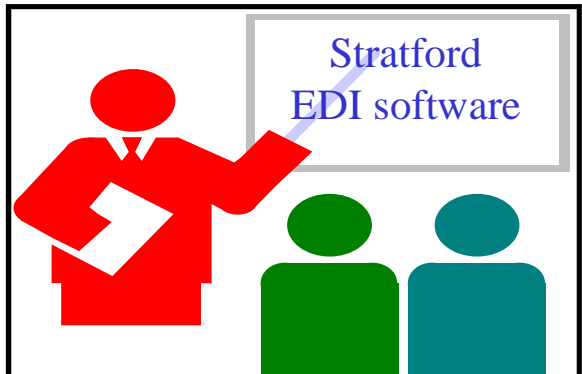
We can receive hundreds of calls in the first few hours each day. It usually is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call. If you call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the callback list. We must do everything we can to avoid "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. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than the fax. This is not very good support if you need a quick answer. The reason is that we get very few support email messages and so 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

If you are new to the Internet or you are interested in getting setup to access the Internet, this is a good time. The Internet is starting to mature. There are some good sites to visit.

If you want to know the weather in your area you can go to www.cnn.com. There is a form for you to enter your city and state and you will get "custom weather" just for you.

If you are interested in knowing more about NASA and the astronauts and the adventure with the Hubble telescope, you can visit www.nasa.gov. They have more photos and information than you can ever download. They have an archive of photos from past space missions. You may be able to get a satellite photo of your home.

Stratford Newsletter

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