stratford notes

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

We have now shipped updates to everyone that is or will be affected by the NHIC password change requirement. If you transmit your Medicare claims to NHIC in California, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire or Vermont and you have not received the update, it means we are not aware that you need it. You need to immediately notify us by fax: (650) 692-1073 and let us know so we can get an update to you immediately. If your software is not updated, you will be forced to transmit your claims manually so you can change the password when required.

We have had many calls about this update. We had the usual calls from people with "bad diskettes", etc. In most cases, the disk is not really bad, but the disk drive is dusty and cannot read the diskette. Most people never use their floppy disk drives more than a few times per year. Every day, the power supply fan is pulling air through all the openings in your computer (including the opening in the floppy disk drive) and out the back of the computer. This airflow cools your computer and that is good. It also pulls in dust from the room. If you have your computer sitting on the floor, you would probably not believe how dirty it is inside.

Some users have noticed that the update did not seem to change anything. The claims transmission process is exactly the same as it was before. We have had many calls from people asking when (and where) they would be asked to enter the new password. The answer is that we have worked hard to design all these changes (and there are many of them) so you would not notice them. The Stratford program automatically generates a new password for you. It does the work in the background while it is creating the electronic claims file. The new password that is generated meets the current payer requirements. We expect these requirements to change for many of our clients in the near future and a new update will probably be required. For example, we will be sending out updates to the password generation for users who transmit Medicare claims to United Healthcare.

We have also received many compliments on the new Windows 95 installer program. We have more on this inside. •

Stratford has more than 3,300 licensed users

FROM THE EDI CORNER......

United Healthcare (Virginia Medicare) has announced new rules for changing passwords. The password must change each month. You cannot use the same password twice in the same year. There are additional technical requirements that make the new password difficult to enter manually. It will be easy for the computer to generate a password that meets the requirements. These new rules are for users who transmit using bisynch communications. •

SCHEDULING A CALL-BACK APPOINTMENT

If you want a support technician to call you at a specific time please fax to (650) 692 1073 **at least two days in advance** to schedule an appointment. This is only applicable in cases where you need someone to work with a hardware technician that is on-site working on your network or similar situation. This type of appointment is not generally covered under software support and you may be charged for the time. We may have a $85.00 minimum charge for helping to configure networks or solving other hardware problems. Other examples are

getting a backup tape or zip drive working.

We may receive a fax at 11AM with a note that says: *We must have a call at 11:30 because we have a hardware person here who needs to talk to you.* This will almost never be possible. There will always be many calls ahead of yours in the morning. On Monday, we may not get caught up until 2 or 3 PM. We cannot put your call ahead of other people just because you are in a hurry. Everyone is in a hurry and everyone wants support as soon as possible. We can only respond on a first-come, first-serve basis. •

CHANGING AREA CODES

Telephone area codes are constantly changing. Stratford's area code changed from 415 to 650 a few months ago. We have had requests for an update that would change the area codes. We would be willing to do this if we could get a reliable, machine-readable list of prefixes that are changing. We cannot do this automatically because we have been "burned" badly in the past. One time we took a list from the phone book and used it to change the numbers. This should be safe enough don't you think? Well, we found out that there were many exceptions. We have also tried changing the number based on the zip code. This often won't work either. The best way to handle it as a temporary fix is to go into the "**city**" data window and change the default. This will cause the new numbers that you enter to default to the area code that you want. You can easily override the ones that are incorrect. •

Century Requirement in Date Fields

Medicare is notifying providers that they must include the century in all date fields in an electronic transmission. This is not really a new requirement. This has been in the specifications for a long time. Medicare is just now beginning to enforce it because of the year 2000 and also because many software vendors do not do it. The Stratford program has had the date fields correct since the specifications first came out this way. We do not anticipate making any changes to our program because of the date fields for Medicare.

Many payers do not have this requirement in the transmission specifications. We do not format the dates with the century in these instances because it would cause a claim rejection. When the specifications change for these payers and clearinghouses, we will make the necessary changes in the program. You will receive an update if it affects you. •

Modem Telephone Numbers and Stratford Support

We prefer to deliver updated files to you:

- by modem
- by email attachment
- by having you download them from the Internet.

Many times we are not able to do this, because our customers do not know the telephone number attached to their

modem. There is no way we can call you unless you know the phone number. If you do not know the number, you should find out now and tape it onto the monitor of the computer that has the modem.

If you have an email account and you can receive an attachment, you should let us know your address anytime we are going to send something to you.

For example, if you want to begin transmitting claims to NEIC, Stratford can assign a password for you. If you are now transmitting Medicare or other claims and you have a communication program like PC Plus; we may be able to get you set-up in a few days. You can fax the request to us and we will set up the files for you. We can download the files to you.

The alternative is for someone to copy the files to diskette and ship them to you. If your floppy disk drive is dusty or the diskette is damaged in shipment, you may not be able to read the diskette (see page 1). We may need to send a new diskette to you. Something that should take a short time can take weeks. •

SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

1   **Faxed requests for support get <u>Priority</u> <u>Service</u>.**

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

3   **Do not call more than one time. The second call places your first call at the bottom of our callback list.**

We can receive many 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 just 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 faxing us. This is not very good support if you need a quick answer. We do not get very many support email messages 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. •
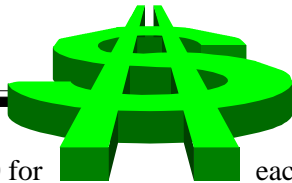
Stratford   will pay you $100 for   each person* you refer who purchases Stratford Software at full price ($895). Simply fax or write to give us your referral. **We must receive the referral notice in advance of the sale**. **We cannot pay for a referral if you notify us after the sale.**   *<u>Subject to</u>

Stratford
EDI software
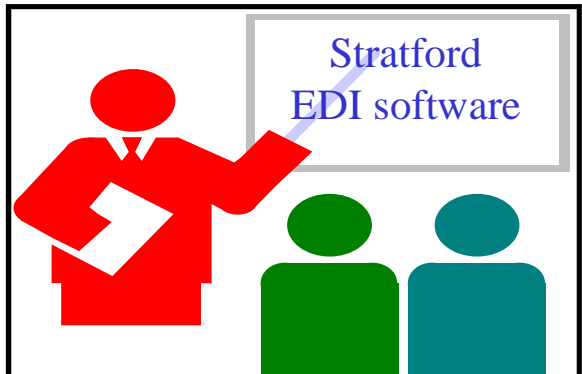
INTERNET RESOURCES

If you have Internet access, there are many good resources that you can use.

Below is one list server that you can subscribe to. The list is about collection and related problems for healthcare billing. Send email to:

`owner@dekaye.com`

or visit this web site and subscribe to the list server:

`www.dekaye.com`

If this type of information is helpful please let us know, by email, of course. See below. •