

# STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Management Software

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## *stratford notes*

Last month's newsletter announced that this year we will deliver our "Windows only" program. We already have several customers signed up to be "beta" sites. If you are interested, be sure to email us at the address on the back page. The first people to see the new program will be required to download it from our Internet web site, so we prefer that you email any requests you have.

For customers with very large databases we will make an SQL version available. Initially the software will work only with Microsoft SQL on a Windows NT server. We will have a version that uses "free tables" the same as the present program so you will not be required to purchase any other software.

We hope to make the new version work over the Internet, if we get the required software that we are expecting from Microsoft.

After we release a working version of the new software, we will make an upgrade available that has "offline views". This will make it possible to copy a small part of a large database to a laptop or "palmtop" computer. You will be able to make changes in the data and then merge the new data with the original data in the large database. We will initially target the new small computers that have a subset of Microsoft Windows called Windows CE.

A use for "offline views" is to download

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Stratford has nearly 3,400 licensed users

the patients with appointments to a small, portable computer that can be carried into the examining room.

Another use for "offline views" is the ability to download information about patients in the hospital to a pocket sized computer. The doctor can take this information to the hospital and make changes and additions to the data. Then when s/he arrives back at the office, the new data can be merged with the original database.

If you are interested in this upgrade, please send an email. If you have a specific application or requirement, please describe that in the email. We are just beginning to design this software, so your input will make a difference. •

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 also available (*by appointment*)

### FROM THE EDI CORNER.....

The last quarter of 1997 was very busy for us. We brought on many more payers for direct transmission. Some of them are listed below.

- GHI Medicare of New York
- Rhode Island Blue Cross/Blue Shield
- Partnership Healthplan
- North America Medical Management
- Oklahoma Blue Cross/Blue Shield using Comaet

#### **In the works:**

- Claims Direct of Arizona
- Actamed of Rhode Island
- Datastream of Pennsylvania
- Kansas Blue Cross/Blue Shield
- IMS (We have had a high-volume of claims to this clearinghouse for many years. The new thing is that we are converting from NSF to ANSI) . •

### STRATFORD POLICIES ON TRANSMITTING TO NEW PAYERS

As you know, the Stratford program will probably transmit directly to more payers and/or clearinghouses than any other practice management software package. We have had payers and customers ask

how we decide which payers/clearinghouses we will include in our "Stratford Accepted Payer List". The answer is very simple: we let our customers decide.

We frequently receive a call from a clearinghouse that wants us to "do some programming" so our customers can transmit to them. Our policy: we do not approach our customers and ask them to transmit to anyone. As with all rules, there are, of course, exceptions. If a clearinghouse is consistently difficult for us to work with and we know of an alternative that we believe would be better for our customer, we will notify that customer. This communication is always private and we always do what the customer wants to do (within reason).

We do program for a payer if that payer has a large number of providers who are not now transmitting and the payer needs a program to distribute to the payers. We will usually do the programming at no cost as long as they will accept a standard ANSI 837 formatted file.

An example of recent programming that we did for an HMO/Medicaid contractor: We provided bulletin board software that will allow the payer to receive claims with no restrictions on the volume. In addition, we programmed our software to transmit to that bulletin board. We do not have any per claim charges, etc. to the payer or our customers. The payer is under no obligation to have a certain number of providers using our software (of course, we hope they do). •

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#### 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

## DOES STRATFORD REQUIRE PC PLUS TO TRANSMIT CLAIMS? No!

The question/complaint always involves the cost of purchasing the communication software. The short answer is: **Stratford does not require PC Plus or any other communication program.**

We have had articles regarding this in the past, but we continue to receive questions, so here is our response.

We have many customers who delete the batch file that causes our program to transfer the control of the computer over to the communication program. If you are transmitting to Medicare and your program number is 964, then the name of the batch file is M6R964.BAT. If your data is in the path: \130\200 then that is where the file is probably located. Billing services and some other Stratford customers with multiple accounts may have the file located in \130\4.

If these people do not have PC Plus, then how do they transmit? If they have Windows 95, there is a free, included program named "hyperterm" that will do the transmission for you.

If "Hyperterm" is free, then why doesn't Stratford recommend it? The reason is simple: we do not know how to write a script that will call the payer, upload a file and also download a file and then copy that file back to the Stratford program. In other words, there is no way to fully automate the process like we can do with PC Plus, at least with the free version that

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Stratford will run your Stratford software related classified ad in our monthly newsletter *free*, upon SHS approval! Fax your ad to us at (650) 692-1073.



is included with Windows 95. We have heard that if the provider will purchase the "full" version of hyperterm, then it would be possible. The problem is that there is no price advantage. For Stratford it is bad because we would need to support two unrelated scripting languages.

We have no working arrangement with the author of PC Plus and if there were a free alternative, we would probably change. We would not change quickly for some basic reasons:

- PCPlus has been around for many years. The program works!
- PCPlus has a DOS version. We estimate that about 60% of our customers still have DOS, possibly with Windows 3.11 and/or LANtastic, etc and cannot run a true 32-bit "Windows" program.
- We have already spent a large amount of development money in creating and maintaining these scripts. We are not anxious to begin supporting another language which produces no income for the company. •

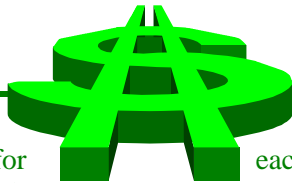
## SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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 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". Hand-written faxes can be almost impossible to read, so please type them whenever possible.

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.

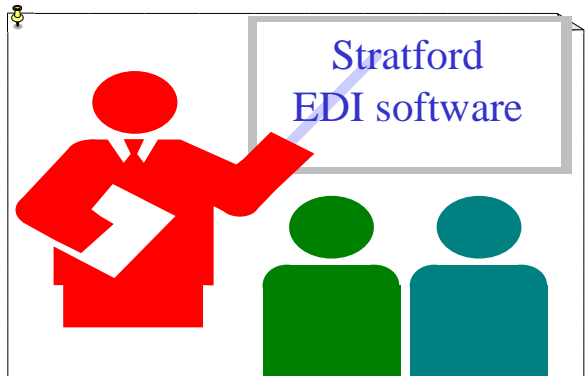
We are interested in hearing from people who would like to receive support by email. •



Stratford you \$100 for you refer who 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 restrictions

will pay each person\* purchases



## INTERNET RESOURCES

Here is our latest recommendation for web sites to visit.

The Mayo Clinic has the following site: <http://www.mayohealth.org/> they were nominated for a "Webby" award by *The Web Magazine*. "Webby awards" are given to the finest sites in cyberspace. You can visit the site and sign up for a free email newsletter called "Housecall"

They have some excellent advice about the 12,000+ health sites on the Internet at: <http://www.mayohealth.org/mayo/9801/htm/judging.htm>

They have links to reputable healthcare sites at: <http://www.mayohealth.org/mayo/common/htm/places.htm> •

### *Stratford Newsletter*

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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) 274-4868*

*Internet: [mail@stratfordsoftware.com](mailto:mail@stratfordsoftware.com)*

*<http://www.stratfordsoftware.com/>*

*New Software Sales Only (800) 274-4594*