

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Management Software

April 1998

stratford notes

We have received many requests for a program that will change area codes. In a previous newsletter we stated that we were unable to find a suitable source for the necessary information. Another requirement is to have the information in a machine-readable format. We have located a source for all phone number changes in the areas of the United States that are served by Pacific Bell. If you are not in Pacific Bell's area and you know of a source for this information in your area, please let us know by faxing it to (650) 692-1073.

We have a program available now that will make changes in the files automatically. The program works like the utility program that loads the AMA, CPT and ICD codes.

Stratford is supplying software to payers so that they can receive claims electronically from providers/submitters. The payer can use their existing claims adjudication procedures and/or software for pricing the claims.

The Stratford program may now be used to transmit claims to the Health Plan of San Mateo.

Stratford provided the Health Plan of San Mateo with bulletin board software that works on an ordinary PC or compatible network. The bulletin board was designed to look like a bulletin board that is in

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Stratford has more than 3,400 licensed users

extremely heavy use by EDS to receive claims. The Stratford bulletin board software allows a provider to transmit as many batches as desired in a single day without fear of losing a previous batch.

This should make it very easy for the provider/submitter to begin transmitting claims. The provider/submitter can use existing software by just changing the phone number, ID and password. The same communication script and electronic claim format can be used. This software has been in all Stratford updates for many years. We will be installing this bulletin board software with several other HMO's in the next few months.

If you are now required to send paper claims to a payer you should tell that payer that they could probably get software from Stratford at a very low cost that would allow them to receive electronic claims. •

You can find Stratford's Internet server at this address:
<http://www.stratfordsoftware.com/>

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.....

EDS will be the exclusive electronic data interchange transaction processing provider for EDI-USA, the only nationwide electronic network sponsored by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. This is a five-year contract.

EDI-USA contracts with 95 percent of the nation's Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans and more than 500 other payer organizations.

As we announced last summer, Stratford signed a contract with EDS to supply software to providers for transmitting claims electronically as well as practice management. •

NPI NOT FORGOTTEN

In the past we had several articles about NPI. This is the National Provider Identifier. We told you that it would start on a given date, then the date was delayed again and again. We still don't have a definite date but the effort is ongoing and will probably be implemented by HCFA this year. When it is available, we will probably eliminate the UPIN and PIN lookup tables and replace everything with

a new NPI lookup.

If possible, we will make a conversion available at no charge to everyone who subscribes to software maintenance on a continuing basis. There will likely be a significant additional charge for customers who do not subscribe to software maintenance. The reason is that the conversion will involve a large number of programming changes and possibly some custom work for different specialties. We will keep you informed as we learn more. •

2 BILLION DOLLARS FOR OXYGEN

Medicare is paying more than two billion dollars for oxygen in the home setting. When a physician orders oxygen for a patient at home, s/he should keep in mind that this amount comes out of the same trust fund which reimburses physicians' services. •

4 DIGIT YEARS

We have received notice that HCFA does not want a 4-digit year on paper claims. Most of you received notice that 4 digit years were required. If your payer rejects your claims, let us know. We can send you an update that will allow you to turn the 4 digit year on and off to comply with the payer requirements. A better option would be for you to begin transmitting claims. The year format has not changed for electronic claims in a long time. •

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 providing software support.

DATA SYNCHRONIZATION

Data synchronization allows a provider with a “disconnected” computer to access up-to-date data from the central computer.

In past articles we have discussed “offline views” and other buzzwords that describe a growing trend in computing.

People need access to data immediately, no matter where they are. They may need to make changes or additions to the data. They need to be certain that the changes or additions will be incorporated into the central database as soon as possible so other people will have access to the new data.

Accessing the data in a real-time mode may be possible in the future using the Internet or its successor. At this time, technology does not allow low-cost real-time access to a large amount of data over long distances.

An alternative is an “offline view”. This is a “snapshot” of the data at a specific time. This is usually a subset of a large database that contains only the information needed by a particular person at a particular time. For example, if the doctor is going to the hospital to make rounds, s/he may only need access to data related to the patients in the hospital and possibly the patients who are scheduled for office visits or surgeries for that day.

In order to use “pieces” of a large database effectively, there must be an easy-to-use and remember procedure for

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updating (synchronizing) the central and remote data. This part is really not too difficult for most people and can be accomplished in several ways using current, reasonably-priced technology. Just like you place your cell-phone or pager in a charging base when not in use, you can use the same method to insure that your palm-top or lap-top computer is synchronized with the central computer.

This is easy. Just place your small computer into a receptacle. Using a workstation, just key in the desired data and instantly it is downloaded to your small computer. Now take the small computer with you, making additions and changes to the data. Later, put the small computer back into the receptacle and the data is automatically synchronized with the central database.

There is one problem. What if you change a patient’s data, and at the same time, a person sitting at a workstation connected to the central computer makes a conflicting change to the same patient data? Who/what determines which data is to be saved? Automatic software rules? Keep the change with the newest date?

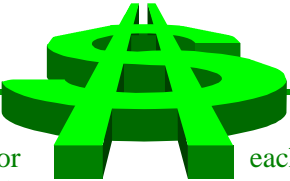
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.**

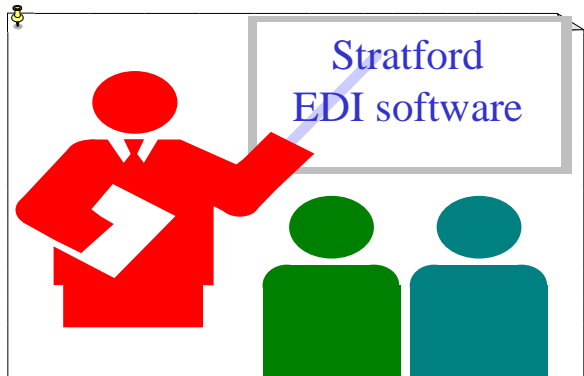
We can receive many calls in the first few hours each day. It usually is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call. If you just call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the callback list. We must do everything we can to avoid "phone-tag". Hand-written faxes can be almost impossible to read, so please type them whenever possible. Include the best time to call you.

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 you refer who each person* 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 restrictions



INTERNET RESOURCES

Here is our latest recommendation for web sites to visit.

www.ljx.com/practice/health/

This site has information that can be categorized as "health law". For example there are articles that discuss: 1) the 1997 Kennedy-Kassebaum health Care Reform Act 2) recent Medical malpractice cases 3) drinking water contaminants 4) accountability in managed Care

This site has many related links:

www.ljx.com/practice/health/herel.html

The links are grouped into two categories: government agencies and related resources. An example of a related resource is the American Academy of HealthCare Attorneys. •

Stratford Newsletter

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