

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Management Software

June 1998

We have received a letter for publication from the Health Care Finance Administration (HCFA).

stratford notes Everything in the letter has been published in our newsletters in the past. This letter makes several things more clear and confirms several things that were not definite before. We will discuss some of the items in the letter below, especially those that will affect providers who do not bill electronically and/or those items that affect providers who do not use the Stratford program.

There is nothing in this letter that will negatively affect any Stratford customer as far as being required to change programs. All Stratford customers now have all the software necessary to meet all known requirements. Some of the incomplete or future requirements will require most, if not all, Stratford customers to receive an update to their software. There will be no additional charges for those customers who are on continuing software support (at least no additional charges are planned at this time).

1. All health plans and clearinghouses and those providers who use electronic data interchange (EDI) must meet the new standards. That's right — not just the Medicare and Medicaid programs but **all** health plans.

2. The provisions also require national standards for medical code sets; standard identifiers for providers, health plans, employers, and individuals; and security

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Stratford has more than 3,500 licensed users

and privacy standards. Any person or organization that provides healthcare services must use these standards.

These new standards will affect every person that uses the Stratford program. The only possible exception would be a "cash only" practice that never bills a health plan and never has a patient that is eligible for Medicare or Medicaid.

These new standards will go into effect 2 years after being adopted by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. (Small health plans have one extra year)

Standards for claims attachments will be adopted the following year.

The benefit will be that the same claim can be sent to any payer. These standards were mandated in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. •

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 \$225

1:30 PM - 4:00 PM \$225

By Appointment \$225

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 following are additions or changes to the list of payers that have certified Stratford software for production transmissions.

ACTAMED - United Healthcare
COSMOS Nationwide

Kansas BC/BS Clearinghouse

Claims Direct (a national clearinghouse)

Medicare North Dakota, all areas. (This is really not new at all, but North Dakota recently took over 6 of Aetna's Medicare contracts)

Rhode Island BC/BS

New York GHI (Queens)

Partnership Health Plan (Medicaid in California: Solano, Napa counties)

North American Medical Management
(Health Plan of the Redwoods)

Oklahoma BC/BS

Texas NHIC (THIN: clearinghouse operation and Texas Medicaid)

Health Plan of San Mateo (Local Medicaid contract, state of California) •

NORTH DAKOTA BCBS DISCONTINUING SUPPORT OF ACE AND AECHO.

Volume 1, Issue 5 of the 'EDI News Flash' announced that ACE software will no longer be distributed. Users may continue to use the AECHO product that was distributed by Aetna, but that will also be discontinued in the future.

We hope that everyone will select the Stratford program since it is fully approved, Y2K certified, and will be fully supported.

Any users in the Western States: Colorado, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, North Dakota, Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, and other states covered should contact Stratford for a special offer. •

Internet Quote: Press any key to continue or any other key to quit...

Internet Quote: Disinformation is not as good as datinformation.

Smokers have 1.5 times as many auto accidents as non-smokers. Smokers are hurt on the job 1.5 - 2.4 times as often as non-smokers.

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.

BILLING SERVICES CHARGING A PERCENTAGE OF COLLECTIONS

We have been notified that it may be illegal for a billing service to be paid a percentage of collections as payment for providing healthcare billing services. If you are not certain that your billing practices are legal, you may want to check with a knowledgeable person.

A reference is the OIG (Office of Inspector General) Advisory Opinion No. 98-4.

Also, it is against Medicare rules to charge a percentage of receipts if the money is assigned to the biller. The practice must get Medicare checks in order for the percentage to be the basis of charges.

Please don't call us, we can't give a legal opinion on this. We are just trying to "give a word to the wise". •

CLARIFICATION OF NSF FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

Recently several customers have sent notices to us regarding the NSF format. Specifically, there can only be one provider (either an independent physician or a group setting) reported in each AA0-ZA0 grouping. This may not mean very much to you if you have not looked at the "TRN" file that the Stratford program creates. This "TRN" file is what you transmit over the phone lines. The Stratford program has always been in

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.



compliance with this requirement. For example, if you have a billing service you know that you have a different path (ex: \130\200, \130\201) for each provider/group. Each transmission is a separate phone call since the various accounts are processed sequentially. You get a separate set of reports for each transmission. The audit trail is kept separate for each provider or group. This enables you to report to the provider or group. This also enables you to solve any problems with one provider/group while continuing to bill for other providers/groups.

We use the same methodology for creating/transmitting the ANSI format files. We believe that this along with being fully Y2K compliant will keep the Stratford program in the forefront indefinitely.

We always appreciate those customers who make us aware of the notices that they receive. Since we sell nationwide and there are more than 30,000 payers (that is right, see the HCFA web site regarding PAYERID), there is no way that we can receive and/or read all the notices. •

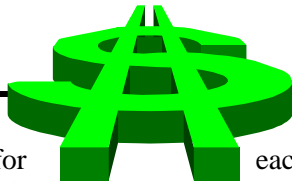
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.

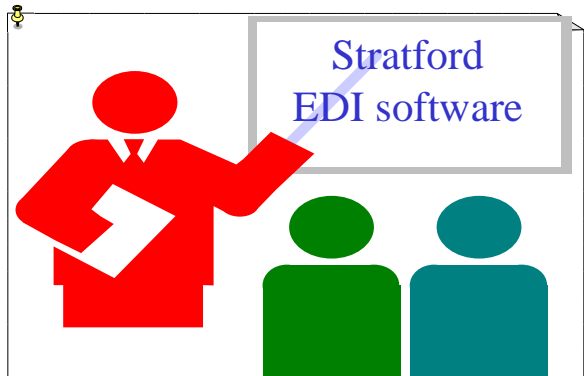
At this time we can deliver support by email. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than faxing us. This is not very good support if you need a quick answer. We do not get very many support email messages so we only check the mail two or three times each day. As the volume 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 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 restrictions



INTERNET RESOURCES

We receive several requests per month regarding our sources for information that we put in this newsletter. We have given the HCFA web address before but here it is again:

<http://www.hcfa.gov/>

Here is one page on the HCFA web site that lists "Initiatives and special projects". Check it out.

<http://www.hcfa.gov/hcfainit.htm>

Here is the web site for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General:

<http://www.dhhs.gov/progorg/oig/>

These sources are important to have available while designing future updates for our software. •

Stratford Newsletter

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