

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Management Software

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We continue to get inquiries about the Y2K potential problem. As we have stated several times, the Stratford program has been Y2K certified and fully checked to the year 2059. All dates entered into the database are fully compliant with all government standards and HCFA requirements. This has been true since 1988. No Stratford customer has any problem with compliance.

All versions of the software beginning with version 1811 have all the data entry fields expanded to accept 4 digit years. Also, all the editing code for date fields (except birth dates, of course) was checked for "rollover 60" compliance. This means if you enter a year with only 2 digits for the year and the value of those digits is less than 60, the century will automatically "rollover" to 2000. For example, if you have a version of the Stratford program number 1811 or later, when you first go into the program you will see the phrase 'Y2K certified' in the upper right corner of the screen. After you enter your "entry word" you will be asked for the date. If you enter something like 07/05/02 the year will be assumed to be 2002 and then on the next screen you will see the date displayed as 07/05/2002.

We are aware of a problem with some older computer hardware that will prevent the proper operation of most software (including the Stratford program) after 12/31/1999. Most "PC" type computers have something called a BIOS. This is a program that runs when you first turn on

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Stratford has nearly 3,600 licensed users

the power to the computer. The BIOS is responsible for checking the memory, serial and parallel ports and other hardware. If your BIOS will not allow the clock to go past 12/31/1999 then there is probably no way for you to use the Stratford program or any other program that requires you to enter dates. Since we have been aware of this for some time, we are looking for a solution. Several years ago, we separated the computer hardware date function from our "system date". This solved the problem for some of the computers that we checked but not all. Unfortunately the computer must have the correct date in order for all the functions to work properly. We believe that most of our customers will upgrade their hardware before the year 2000 so this should not be a problem. We have more "Y2K" information in this newsletter that you should read if you have an older computer system. •

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.....

Electronic Claim Submitters in Hawaii, Arizona and Nevada will convert from GTE to MCS in November 1998 and submitters in Washington, Oregon and Alaska will convert in January 1999. What does this mean for Stratford customers? Nothing really since Stratford has been in compliance with the MCS requirements for years. It is possible that the scripts will change for a new bulletin board and that will require an update. If the bulletin board does not change, then Stratford customers will not get an update that is related to this change. Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota is the Medicare contractor for these states. Many of Stratford's customers in Washington and Oregon transmit their Medicare claims to NDEX. NDEX then forwards the claims to NDBCBS. No change is anticipated for these users. We have an excellent working relationship with NDEX and have many customers transmitting claims to them. •

CHECK YOUR COMPUTER FOR Y2K COMPLIANCE

As far as we know, all computers sold in the past year are Y2K compliant. This

may not be true, however, and we suggest that you check into it to be sure. Here is a simple way to check whether or not your computer's clock will automatically change from the year 1999 to 2000. On most computers, as you are leaving one day, you can just go to a DOS prompt and type

Date

and then press [Enter]. This will display the date that is currently in the computer hardware. Change the date to 12/31/1999 and then leave the office as usual. If you have windows, you should exit the DOS prompt and leave the computer the same as you ordinarily would at night. You should not turn your computer off!

Caution: do not process any forms or they will be dated incorrectly. Also, if you do a backup, it will have the wrong date. While this is not a "fatal" problem, it could cause confusion.

When you arrive back at the office the next day, go to a DOS prompt and type:

Date

If the computer now displays 01/01/2000 then your computer is probably Y2K compliant and you will not have any problems. We are certain that there will probably be some exceptions so we will continue to monitor the Y2K "thing" for you and no doubt there will be more articles in the future.

After doing this test, be sure to reset the date! •

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.

STRATFORD PLANS FOR FUTURE VERSIONS

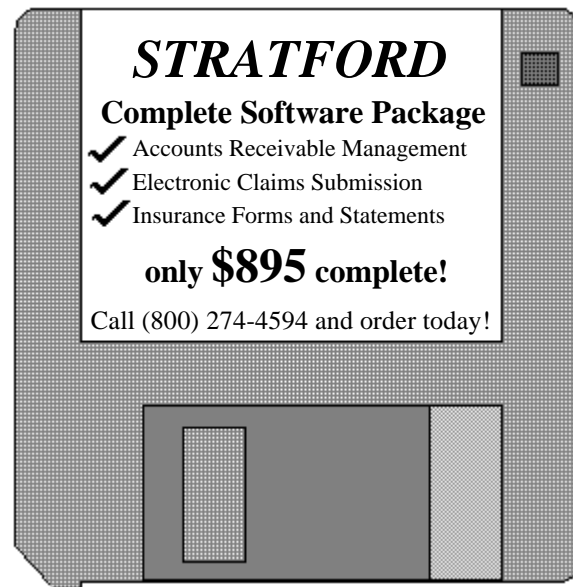
Several of our larger customers have asked if we plan to support SQL. The answer is yes.

While our present database structure is actually faster than SQL (in our tests) for up to 40 users, SQL has fairly “flat” performance as you increase the number of users to 1,000 or more. This is called “scalability”. In other words, SQL “scales” much better than most “free table” type database structures like we now have.

Another feature of SQL databases is security. SQL databases are encrypted and require a password for access. The present file structure that we use is very “open”. It is very easy for a knowledgeable person to access the data in the Stratford files. We did this purposefully because we have always had many requests for custom reports. The present file structure allows you to use Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, Excel, Crystal Reports, R&R, and almost all other popular report generators, word processors, spreadsheets and database managers to create reports of all types. Many of the newer reporting tools such as Crystal Reports can also access SQL databases.

Microsoft has announced some new features in the upcoming SQL 7.0 version of their SQL database. They will offer true “row locking”. We now have this with our present product. This allows many people to look at a patient record

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.



simultaneously without fear of one user overwriting another user’s changes.

SQL requires more computer resources than our present database structures. It requires an NT server with about 48 Megs of memory (not disk space) for 5 users. It requires about 1 gig of memory (not disk space) for 10 thousand users.

MS SQL version 7.0 allows dynamic growth of the database and easy multi-site management. This means many installations may not need a dedicated MIS person on staff.

MS SQL version 7,0 will allow a backup while the database is being accessed with only about 5% performance degradation.

We plan to offer this as an option for our larger customer installations.

While this does not affect most of our customers, it is important for larger clinics and HMOs that want to inter-connect several hundred providers.

See our Internet web site for more complete information about our plans for

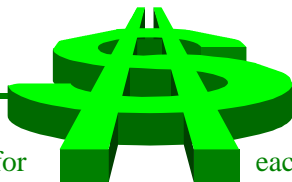
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.

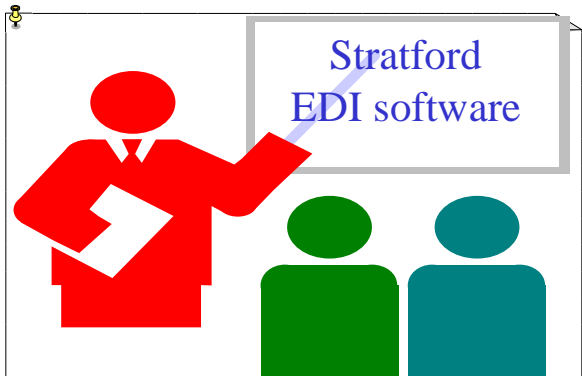
At this time we can deliver support by email. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than faxing us. This is not very good support if you need a quick answer. We do not get very many support email messages so we only check the mail two or three times each day. As the volume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

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



Stratford 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



INTERNET RESOURCES

Since its start in 1966, Florida Medicare has been meeting the needs of the Medicare community with quality specialty-specific training, offering authoritative instruction in the proper billing of Medicare claims. Florida Medicare works directly with HCFA to provide training for the provider community on a local and national scale.

This is their training web site:
<http://www.medicaretraining.com/>

This web site has on-line training courses that you can download and run on your computer. Some of the courses are:

- ICD-9-CM Diagnosis Coding
- Front Office Management
- Introduction to the World of Medicare
- CPT Procedure Coding for Beginners

Stratford Newsletter

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