

# STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Management Software

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## *stratford notes*

This summer we began a project to re-design our database. You may not be aware of any changes because the database modifications are done automatically when you first go into the Stratford program after loading an update. These changes have been in the planning stages for a long time and they will be phased in over the coming years. The first change started going out to customers this summer. It involves the insurance file.

Since 1988, we have had the insurance information in the same file with the providers, referring persons, facilities, laboratories, guarantors, etc. In fact, all names and addresses were kept in the same file named m6a143.dbf. If you have interfaced a third-party report generator such as Crystal Reports or R&R, you are probably aware of this. If you have custom reports that involve accessing the insurance name and address, you will need to change your templates so that you get the insurance information from a new file named m6nmco.dbf.

The reason for moving the insurance information at this time is to make more space. There are several pieces of information (codes) that are, or will be, required for insurance claim processing. One that is needed now is called NAIC. This is not related to NEIC, the clearinghouse. Another code that will be needed for Medicare processing soon is named PAYERID.

Some customers who have received

## inside this issue . . . . .

- Stratford Notes
- From the EDI corner
- E&M Guidelines
- HP Laser Printers
- EDI Standards
- Software Support Notes
- Internet Resources

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Stratford has more than 3,600 licensed users

updates have asked about the changes in the insurance record. In the past, Stratford has used the name PAYERID to mean the insurance company lookup code. Since Medicare will be using that word for a new coding structure, we have changed the name that we use to "EDI Lookup". This is more descriptive but may be confusing if you are used to the old screen layout. When you get your next update, please look at the insurance data entry screen and fax any comments you have to us at (650) 692 1073. Since this screen will change completely in the next 2 years, we need to know about anything that is confusing.

We will be removing all the information from the "143" file except for the guarantor information in the coming years.

Our long-term goal is to keep the database

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.....

**Northern California Medicare** (NHIC) announced the following changes in EDI transmissions beginning October 1, 1998: (1) Claims cannot be transmitted through CompuServe. (2) Claims cannot be sent on a toll free number. (3) All modem connections must be 14,400 BAUD or greater. Stratford is generally aware of customers who transmit claims to Medicare, but we have no way to know what kind of modem you have. If you do not know what kind of modem you have, you should check with your hardware vendor to be sure you can transmit at 14,400 BAUD or greater. If you call us, we will try to help, but you still may be required to contact your hardware vendor. Stratford will have an update available that will automatically activate the correct phone number and scripts. This update will go out automatically to those customers who subscribe to software support on an on-going basis only.

**Florida Medicare** will not accept claims that are not Y2K (millennium) compliant beginning October 1, 1998. Also, the latest revision to the ICD-9-CM coding structure will take effect October 1, 1998. The existing codes will still be accepted until December 31, 1998. •

## E & M GUIDELINES

The implementation of the 1998 Evaluation and Management Guidelines (E & M) has been postponed indefinitely. HCFA continues to work with the AMA to develop acceptable E & M Guidelines. In the meantime, all Medicare carriers have been instructed to use either the 1995 or 1998 guidelines, whichever is more favorable to the provider.

## HP LASER PRINTERS

We have had several customers complain about not being able to print the HCFA 1500 form correctly on their new HP laser printer. Many of these customers could print the form with no problems on an older HP laser printer. We have heard that there is a problem with the software drivers that are being delivered with these new laser printers, specifically Model 4000 but also others. We have solved most of these problems by changing the printer driver to the old Laser Jet II or Laser Jet III driver that comes with Windows. Some of the fancy features may not work but we have not had even one customer who cared about any of the fancy features.

Another problem with these printers is the "console" software that comes with them. This is a resident program that runs all the time and is available from the task bar in Windows. We recommend that you disable this "background" program if you are having any problem with your printing. •

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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 providing software support.

## EDI STANDARDS

This article is written using information from Blue Cross of California but it is generally applicable to all payers.

All Blue Cross of California EDI trading partners (Stratford is a trading partner) received notice recently regarding EDI format requirements.

The following formats will be supported for Year 2000 compliance:

- NSF 2.0
- ANSI 837, version 3032
- ANSI 837, version 3041
- ANSI 837, version 4010

ANSI 837 version 4010 will be accepted beginning 11/1/1998.

The Blue Cross of California proprietary format will not be updated to become Year 2000 compliant. All Stratford customers were converted to the ANSI format more than one year ago, so this will not affect any Stratford customer who subscribes to software support. It is possible that Stratford users who get their software support from a local dealer have not been updated. We have the update available for all dealers. We encourage all dealers to be certain that their customers have the latest updates.

Stratford has already provided Blue Cross of California with our schedule for Year 2000 compliance. Several Medicare contractors have already certified Stratford. We will obtain certification from all our customer's payers as soon as possible.

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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.



Blue Cross also confirmed that by 1st quarter 2001, the ANSI 837 version 4010 will be the only electronic format supported by all insurance carriers, including Blue Cross of California, due to the HIPPA mandated standards.

Stratford has already coded the draft standard specifications for ANSI 837 version 4010. It has not been tested because we are not aware of any payers who accept the format at this time. We are ready to begin testing when the payers are ready. All Stratford customers can be assured that Stratford will have software available that is fully compliant with ANSI 837 version 4010 a year or more before it is required. We plan to begin installing this version exclusively for all new customers as soon as the payers accept it. We will also begin converting all existing customers who subscribe to software support. Depending on the complexity of the update required there may be a substantial charge for those customers who do not subscribe to software support on an on-going basis. •

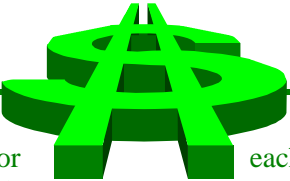
## SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.**

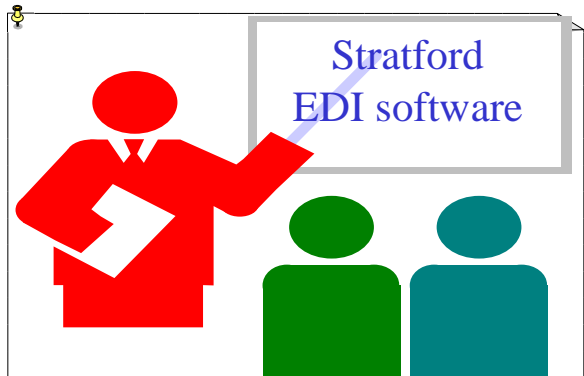
We can receive many calls in the first few hours each day. It usually is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call. If you just call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the callback list. We must do everything we can to avoid "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

Subject: Y2K testing. After last month's newsletter articles, we were asked for more tests and/or references.

Here is a free service from ZD net's Virtual Labs. You can go to this web site:

<http://VL1.ZDNET.COM/SCRIPTS/Y2K.PL>.

and you will find a free test that you can download and run on your hardware. You should fill out the form and report your findings. There is public survey available. When we looked at the results, 4638 tests had been reported that showed 17.6% non-Y2K-compliant and 82.4% compliant.

Remember, the Stratford program **IS** Y2K compliant but your hardware may not be. Check it out now. •

### *Stratford Newsletter*

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