stratford notes

S tratford has been selected by another major Medicare contractor with 11 states to supply provider software. This will provide us with software distribution by Medicare in all western states including Hawaii and Alaska and almost all northern states, Colorado, Iowa and four states in New England. We believe that nearly 50% of all providers who bill Medicare now have access to Stratford software directly from Medicare.

We will have more information available regarding this new contract on our web site when the final contracts have been approved.

Our goal is to supply software to all Medicare contractors in the USA.

Recently we started an email support newsgroup. This is now available to all subscribers of software support, both dealers and end users.

Until further notice, if you get all your support by email, you will not be charged more than the minimum charge. If you are now paying more than the minimum, we will determine the use over a period of 90 days. We will announce any changes in this policy in this newsletter and also on our web site on the "Support Policy" page.

The primary purpose of the newsgroup is

You can find Stratford's Internet server at this address:

inside this issue . . . .

- Stratford Notes
⇒ Expanded Medicare distribution
⇒ New Stratford email Support group
- From the EDI corner
- Your Credit Card and Y2K
- Year 2000 Compliance Inquiries
- Software Support Notes
- Internet Resources

Stratford has nearly 3,700 licensed users

to allow users to help other users.

The secondary purpose is to allow for a lower minimum cost support option. If the email support works as we anticipate, it may allow us to eventually lower the minimum support fee to a small fraction of the current amount. If there is sufficient demand, we may set up a free Internet support group that will not be monitored on a regular basis by the Stratford support team.

Someone from the support team will monitor the newsgroup several times each day. As usual, until the volume justifies full time monitoring, the fastest way to obtain support is by fax to (650) 692 1073.

Be sure to send any comments on the new support option to Stratford by fax at (650) 692 1073. •

FROM THE EDI CORNER ......

Stratford has been approved for submitting claims in Indiana using the ANSI X.12 format through Administar.

Stratford has been approved by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Tennessee for ANSI X.12 UB-92 claims.

We are currently testing for Medicare in Missouri ANSI X.12, Florida Medicare ANSI X.12 (UB-92), Blue Cross of California ANSI X.12 (UB-92), and New York Empire Medicare ANSI X.12.

Currently we are working with Railroad Medicare to have Stratford users submit their Railroad Medicare claims electronically direct to Railroad Medicare.

We have also begun the testing process for submitting claims directly to DME through the Stratford software. When we are approved, Stratford users will not be required to use DME supplied software for submitting claims.

For Stratford users in Massachusetts and surrounding states with access to Blue Cross/Blue Shield we are working with them so that you may transmit your claims directly to them. This includes Medicaid,

which uses a different form than the HCFA-1500.

When testing for the first time for Medicare in Northern California, they now require a test batch be no less than 25 claims.

Please remember: the testing process for submitting claims can be a quick process or, at times, a lengthy one. We try to expedite the process as much as possible but we can only go as fast as the payer allows.

Stratford customers who presently transmit to THIN (Texas Health Information Network) should review their list of payers. They recently added many more payers that you can now send electronic claims. •

YOUR CREDIT CARD AND Y2K

The Y2K problem has already created problems for many Americans. Many people have received new credit cards with expirations dates listed as 00 for the year. Some credit card processing systems see this as an invalid year and reject the card. If you have a card like this, be careful about running out of money while traveling. •

If computers are the answer, it must've been a pretty stupid question

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.

YEAR 2000 COMPLIANCE INQUIRIES

Have you received a request to certify that you are "Y2K compliant"? As you can imagine we receive this type of request several times per week.

The Stratford program is Y2K certified by those payers who have tested it. That is really all we can claim. If a provider uses a current version of the Stratford program and that provider transmits to a payer that has certified the program then the provider can safely claim that s/he is Y2K compliant. But can s/he really claim that?

It is possible that the provider's hardware is not Y2K compliant. The operating system and/or BIOS cannot correctly store dates after December 31, 1999. This can keep the programs that run on that hardware, including the Stratford program, to fail or operate incorrectly.

In past newsletters, we have published various tests that you can do to determine the status of your hardware. Unfortunately, no one really knows what may happen after December 31, 1999.

Our legal council has advised us not to sign a document that is written by another company.

The problem is that we may actually be Y2K compliant, but if the other company is not, it may take a lawsuit to determine who is at fault if there is a problem.

The problem with signing a document written by another company or person is

that you may be accepting liability for something that is out of your control. What we tell payers and clearinghouses is that we are willing to participate in any reasonable tests to determine if we are compliant with their systems. Unless we are given total control of the system that is being used by another organization, there is no way that we can accept any liability.

Congress tried to pass a law limiting the liability in Y2K issues. So far, they haven't given any protection.

We have a page on our web site that you can view by clicking on the "Y2K certified" button. It serves the function of our Y2K disclosure notice. It goes into some detail about the work we have done with our software and some of the vendors that supply products to us. Because Stratford software is created using Microsoft software development products, we recommend that anyone who is interested in researching Stratford software and Y2K compliance issues review the information on Microsoft's Internet web site. •
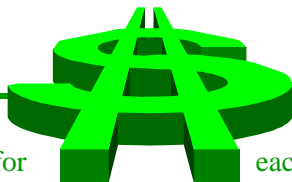
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

1   Faxed requests for support get <u>Priority</u> <u>Service</u>.

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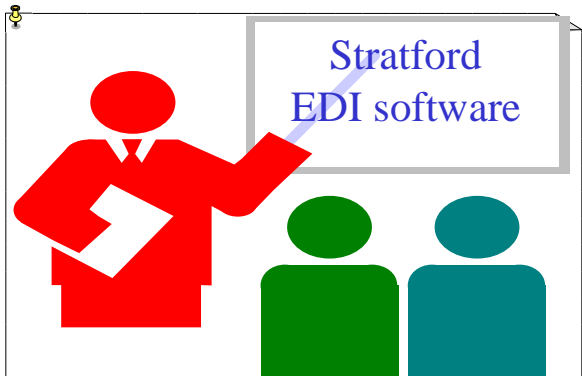
At this time we can deliver support by email. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than faxing us. This is not very good support if you need a quick answer. We do not get very many support email messages so we only check the mail two or three times each day. As the volume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

Stratford EDI software

INTERNET RESOURCES

Subject: Y2K information.

The FDA has these two sites:

`http://www.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/year2000/y2k_search.cfm`

`http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/yr2000/year2000.html`

EDS has the following web site:

`http://www.vendor2000.com/`

There are many other Y2K sites that are of interest to healthcare providers and payers. We will try to list them here. If you know of a site which you believe would be of interest to our readers, please send it by email to the address below.
Thanks, Stratford Y2K administrator
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