

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Management Software

March 1999

Since we are being asked questions regarding the Y2K “bug/thing” almost daily now, *stratford notes* we will probably need to discuss it from different angles each month until everyone is satisfied that there will be no crisis.

Many of our suppliers and users of our software including customers, payers, clearinghouses, etc. are very concerned that their bills may not go out. Many people are concerned that Medicare will not accept their claims, or maybe the claims will go into a “computer somewhere” and be lost forever. If our customers do not get paid, they can’t meet their payroll and pay their rent.

There are many potential Y2K related problems. The solution is to work hard to correct any problems that you have with your systems. Try to be sure that your vendors will not have problems that will affect you.

As all of our long-time customers know, the Stratford program has been Y2K ready for many years. All Stratford customers now have programs that will work correctly after January 1, 2000. We plan at least one more update this year for all customers who have software support to insure that everyone has the latest programming.

All of our customers should be aware that the majority of private payers still cannot accept 4 digit years in their electronic transmissions. That is correct. This is

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Stratford has nearly 3,800 licensed users

March 1999 and we know that we will probably be forced to deliver emergency program updates to many of our customers to change the transmission formats for payers who wait until the last minute. If you are able to download and install programs from the Internet, we will be able to keep you up to date at all times. If you require floppy diskettes, there may be a time next Fall that you cannot get timely updates.

If you transmit claims to a clearinghouse, you may be covered by their ability to modify your claims for the payer. If you transmit directly to a payer, then you will need an update from Stratford. We will have regular news about this here and on our web site. If you do not now have Internet access, please think about learning how to send email. In the future, you can lower your costs by being able to download updates from the Internet. We are moving in that direction. •

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

Stratford's EDI claim format is now approved by CSA Provider Services (a clearinghouse in Arizona).

Stratford's customers can now transmit Medicare Part A (UB92) claims to Florida BlueCross BlueShield for all types of Part A billing. •

DSL & EDI QUESTIONS

We are getting questions from customers who are planning to get a DSL (xDSL, aDSL, sDSL) connection to the Internet. They want to know if they can transmit claims with this connection. The answer, at this time, is probably not.

We are not aware of any large payer that routinely accepts claims via the Internet, including Medicare payers. We do know of "pilot" programs and other special situations. We have had past articles in this newsletter about sending Medicare claims via the Internet. There is some information on the hcf.gov web site.

I don't suffer from insanity,
I enjoy it.

At this time, you should plan to keep your regular modem and dial-up "analog" phone line. Note that if you install one of the new DSL "digital" Internet connections, you will be required to pay for an "analog" line as well. You can connect this "analog" line to your modem exactly as you have done all along. This will allow you to transmit your claims as usual and still "surf" the Internet on the new high-speed DSL connection.

DSL is not really new any more than isdn, but it is just now being offered by the regional bell operating companies such as Bell Atlantic and Pacific Bell. The minimum speed DSL connection that we have seen is 128K (up-link)/384K (downlink) "asymmetrical". Even though most isdn connections are 128K/128K "symmetrical", the actual speed that you will realize with DSL is many times faster than isdn. The reason is that the delay for Internet connections is generally the downloading of web pages. Most DSL connections are a minimum of 384K (3 times faster than isdn) but they may actually go as fast as 1.5M (15 times faster than isdn or 30-50 times faster than ordinary modems).

Stratford is ready to transmit claims via the Internet as soon as payers begin accepting them. If you receive a notice from a payer that will accept claims via the Internet, please let us know. If you have Windows 95/98/NT, we will be able to build your templates and get you started. •

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.

Y2K QUESTIONS ABOUT STRATFORD

These are the most frequent questions we have received regarding the “Y2K bug” and Stratford software. If you have a question that is not listed here, please fax it to (650) 692 1073 or email to y2k@stratfordsoftware.com

1. Q. Will the year 2000 be a leap year?

A. Yes.

2. Q. What does Year 2000 compliance mean to Stratford?

A. Year 2000 compliance means that the system will accurately store, process, provide and/or receive date data, within, from, into and between centuries, including leap year calculations. Additionally, dates prior to, on, after or spanning January 1, 2000 will not affect the performance or the functionality. We welcome you to visit our web site for more complete information including some tests you can do on your hardware.

3. Q. Do you have a test plan for testing Y2K compliance.

A. No. Stratford has already tested its Y2K modifications and those modifications are in production at this time.

4. Q. Is your company aware of the impact of the Year 2000 on its operations?

A. Yes. We have completed the evaluation of all Stratford supporting

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.



systems.

5. Q. Does your company have a Year 2000 compliance plan in place today and what is the target date?

A. Yes. The Year 2000 modifications are in place and running in production mode. The present Stratford program did not require any modifications as it was originally designed to be Y2K compliant.

6. Q. Will there be any impact to your operations related to the Year 2000 that could affect Customer support or software operation.

A. No. All internal operations here at this company are fully Y2K ready at this time.

7. Q. Have you assessed the impact of external entities that might have an impact on your operations and taken action to ensure that they can provide uninterrupted service to your organization?

A. We are aware of many potential problems. We are working with our suppliers, where possible, to insure a smooth transition. •

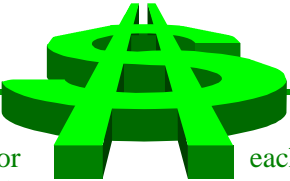
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.**

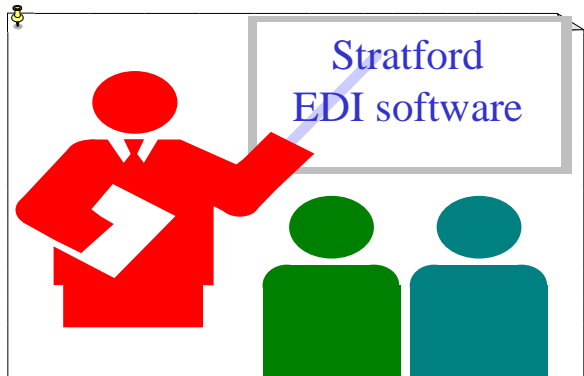
We can receive many calls in the first few hours each day. It usually is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call. If you just call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the callback list. We must do everything we can to avoid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

Did you ever want to know more about a physician? You can look them up by Specialty, Name, State, City, and Zip code. You can even do a "sounds-like" type search on the name or the city.

This AMA site has as much information as you ever wanted to know.

<http://www.ama-assn.org/aps/amahg.htm>

This Internet site lists all physicians in the 54 US licensing jurisdictions: 50 states, District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

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Stratford Newsletter

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