

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Management Software

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stratford notes

HCFHA has announced that there will not be any ICD-9 code changes for next year, which begins October 1, 1999.

The reference for this is the Federal Register May 7th, page 24741- section 8.

We have been told that there are conferences being given in various locations by consultants who are distributing examples of new codes.

The ICD-9 codes are the responsibility of a Federal interdepartmental committee named National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and HCFA. The NCHS has the lead responsibility for the ICD-9-CM diagnosis codes and HCFA has the lead responsibility for the ICD-9-CM procedure codes. This committee did hold public meetings and they did consider approval of coding changes for Fiscal Year 2000 at public meetings. They decided not to implement any changes for FY 2000. The reason is that they must make a major effort to ensure that all of the Medicare computer systems are ready to function on January 1, 2000. The code changes were postponed until FY 2001 which begins October 1, 2000.

This is especially important because it may postpone the introduction of a new coding structure: ICD-10 -CM codes. These codes have more characters than the current ICD-9-CM codes and are not supported by most computer software now being used by Healthcare providers and payers.

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Stratford has nearly 3,900 licensed users

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

Most people know they must be able include the century in their dates. They must also be sure they can use the new ICD-10-CM codes. The codes will be required sometime in the next 2-5 years.

We have already designed a database modification which will expand the current diagnosis field that is kept in the transaction file and also in the diagnosis lookup file. This modification, like all other database upgrades will occur with an ordinary update and no user intervention will be required. If a conversion lookup table is made available by HCFA, we plan to include it with the update.

We are not promising a definite date at this time, but a beta of our new Windows program will probably be available for Internet download this summer. If you are interested, please send an email. •

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

If you want to begin direct transmission of claims to a payer, please send a fax to (650) 692 1073. •

HUMOR FROM THE INTERNET

Q: Meaning of the acronym HMO

A: It comes from Dr. Howard Moe who discovered that a patient could be made to forget about the pain in his foot if he was poked hard enough in the eye.

Q: My pharmacy plan only covers generic drugs. I need the name brand. I tried the generic medication, but it gave me a stomach ache. What should I do?

A: Poke yourself in the eye.

Q: I need to see a specialist, but my doctor insists he can handle my heart transplant right in his office.

A: Considering that all you are risking is the \$10 co-payment, there is no harm in giving him a shot at it.

Q: What happens if I want to try alternative forms of medicine?

A: You will need to find alternative forms of payment.

Q: I just joined an HMO. How difficult will it be to choose the doctor I want?

A: Just slightly more difficult than choosing your parents. You will receive a book that lists two groups of doctors. The first group is no longer accepting new patients. The second group will be able to see you but they are no longer part of the plan. •

RUMOR FROM THE INTERNET

A person who works in a medical billing office posted this recently about her brother's new job with the FBI: a five-hour exam was required. The first 3 hours covered CPT codes and healthcare chart auditing. •

DATABASE SALES

Oracle surpassed IBM in sales of database products in 1997 to become the number one supplier. Recently, CNET reported that IBM has surpassed Oracle in sales of its database product DB2. IBM now has 32.3% of the market, Oracle has less than 29.4% and Microsoft has 10.2% with its database product SQL server. Informix has 4.4% share and Sybase has 3.5% of the database software market.

A Dataquest report states that the database software market will grow to \$10 billion by 2003. •

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.

INTERNET PRIVACY

Many people are concerned about internet privacy. They want to know what happens to information that they enter while they are online.

The Stratford Website has its privacy policy linked from the homepage. We posted it in January 1999.

Our privacy policy, in one sentence is:

[Any and all information collected at this site will be kept strictly confidential]

We have heard of some of our competitor's practice of selling their customer lists for advertising policies. We have never done this. We consider our customer list "confidential property" and every Stratford employee and subcontractor must sign a contract that safeguards Stratford confidential property.

Because of abuse on the Internet: Spam as well as violation of citizen's constitutional rights to privacy, we believe there will be many state and federal laws passed in the near future. Some of these laws will be good and will help protect all of us.

Here are some web sites by people and organizations concerned with privacy. If you are interested in internet privacy, we recommend that you visit these sites. Most of these sites allow you to send comments.

<http://www.ftc.gov/>
Federal Trade commission. We send all Spam that we receive to uce@ftc.gov

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.



<http://www.cdt.org/>
Center for Democracy and Technology

<http://www.house.gov/science/>
Committee on Science in the US House of Representatives

<http://www.itaa.org/>
Information Technology Association of America

<http://www.truste.org/>
the Internet industry's privacy seal program

<http://www.privacyalliance.org/>
Online privacy alliance

<http://www.bbbonline.org/>
Better Business Bureau on-line

<http://www.senate.gov/~burns/>
This is US Senator Conrad Burns from Montana.

<http://www.senate.gov/~burns/privsbmt.htm>

A copy of the "Online privacy protection act" •

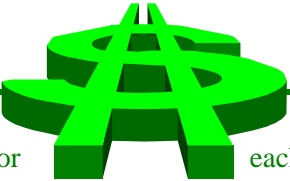
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.**

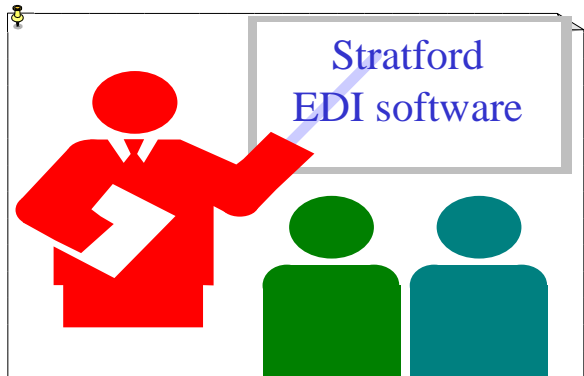
We can receive many calls in the first few hours each day. It usually is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call. If you just call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the callback list. We must do everything we can to avoid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

Here are some Y2K sites that relate to healthcare legal issues.

<http://www.y2kalert.com/hlthchk1.html>

<http://www.y2klaw.com/>

Here is a site in the UK

<http://www.iqpc.co.uk/legal/conf.shtml?19990420000551>

<http://business.bug2000.co.uk/>

Stratford Newsletter

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New Software Sales Only (800) 274-4594