STRATFORD

S ince this is the last month of the 20th century, we will continue the Y2K theme.

stratford notes   Stratford is ready for the year 2000. All Stratford customers have year 2000 "Y2K" compliant software. We are not aware of any problems that will affect any of our customers that has anything to do with our software.

If any customer has any questions or concerns, we would like to know any details as soon as possible. You can fax to (650) 692 1073 or email to Y2K@stratfordsoftware.com.

Most of you probably got the mailing from HCFA in November regarding "National Y2K Testing week. The dates for this were November 15th through November 20th, 1999. As far as we know, all Stratford customers passed all tests without problems. Even though we now have more than 4,000 licensed users and possibly that many more who are not licensed directly with Stratford, we did not receive even one trouble call related directly to the HCFA Y2K testing process.

Stratford software is used to bill all Medicare contractors in the United States. As far as we know, all these Medicare contractors are ready to process claims in the year 2000. As far as we know, all customers who subscribe to our software support continuously are also ready to bill payers in the year 2000.

Medicare Participation
If you bill Medicare and you do not now

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Stratford has more than **4,000** licensed users

You can find Stratford's Internet server at this address:
`http://www.stratfordsoftware.com/`

"participate" you should consider signing an agreement with Medicare now. There are definite financial advantages. Here are two:

1. The Medicare fee schedule is 5% higher for some professional services, other services and supplies.
2. Automatic billing of some secondary payers such as non-employment related Medigap coverage.

In 1999, 84.6% of all providers who bill Medicare signed participation agreements.

Stratford Holiday Schedule
We hope all our customers have a happy holiday season this year.

Stratford will be closed for the holidays:
Friday December 24th
Friday December 31st

If our computers don't "blow up" or something horrible like that, we will be back, ready to support you Monday, January 3rd, 2000. •

FROM THE EDI CORNER ......

Internet electronic claims...
Last month we reported on a new 100% Internet claims submission capability with an HMO in California named MPMG. This month we can report that we are approved and the claims can now be processed. •

EMAIL SUPPORT

We had a good response to previous articles about our new support services.

Many of our customers are beginning to use email for support. Several have commented that they did not realize how easy it would be. Just think, you can initiate the support request any time, any hour. We can answer without 'phone tag' or worrying about your lunch hour or your time zone. You can get your answer anytime that is convenient. We are aware of a customer near Boston Massachusetts who got an answer in less than 5 minutes from a support person in Burlingame California. It is unlikely that a phone call would have been this quick.

To make the support even better and faster, please put your account number in the 'subject' area of the email. This allows us to identify you and access your account quickly. This is especially important if you have an on-going support issue. Also it helps if you put a short description of the problem in the subject. Here is an example of a very helpful subject: "306890, setup transmission to Cigna DME."

While we are aware that not all support issues can be resolved quickly by email, most can. If you have an EDI issue that requires you to follow a step-by-step process, then email is far better than talking to someone on the phone. Voice communication is not the best for typing in passwords. For example, you may think the support person says "N" when really they said "M". Another problem is upper and lower case. If you type "m" instead of "M" it will not work.

If you have not tried email, now is the time. Just go to hotmail.com, yahoo.com or any of the other sites that offer free email and set up your account. There are companies that now offer free, unlimited Internet access as well as email. After you get your email working, send a test email to a friend. If they are able to receive your email and you are able to get their reply, you are ready to get your support by email from Stratford. Just send your support request email to this address: support@stratfordsoftware.com

Remember: we believe that if all our customers used email for support, the cost would drop dramatically. •

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.

ANSWERS TO SOME TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

We have been receiving many support requests from customers who need help filling out Medicare questionnaires regarding their software. Here are some of the common questions and recommended answers.

Name of software vendor:
Stratford Software, Inc.
Stratford is a California corporation. Stratford's federal tax ID is 91-1984092

Claim format:
ANSI v3051-3B.01
Note that Stratford also currently supports NSF 1.04, NSF 2.0, NSF 3.01, ANSI v3032, ANSI v3051-3B as well as other versions of NSF and ANSI.

We also support ANSI remittance and eligibility formats. Stratford is also ready to begin supporting ANSI 4010.

Many of our customers were surprised to learn that they were not required to do 'future date testing' with their Medicare carrier. This is because we did it for you during the past several years. We have a very close relationship with many Medicare contractors. We specialize in EDI and pride ourselves in our ability to stay ahead of all the Medicare requirements regarding EDI.

We expect many changes in the coming years regarding EDI and we will do our best to keep all our customers updated as required.

Most of our customers are not aware that there were hundreds of changes that were planned for 1999 but were put on hold because of the potential Y2K problem. All these changes will occur in the coming year as well as the changes that were planned for the year 2000. These include ICD and CPT changes in addition to EDI changes. We also expect more payers to begin using the Internet to receive claims and to deliver eligibility and remittance information.

If you subscribe to Stratford support continuously, your billing requirements are stored in our computer. This happens over time as we help you set up templates for various payers. This information insures that you will receive the necessary updates so that you are able to send your claims. You receive a monthly statement that lists the payers and clearinghouses that you currently transmit to. This is going to be extremely important in the next five years as all healthcare billing changes from paper and private dial-up networks to the Internet. •

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. •
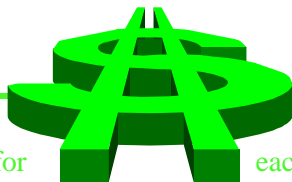
Stratford   will pay
you $100 for   each person*
you refer who   purchases
Stratford Software at full price ($895). Simply
fax or write to give us your referral. **We must
receive the referral notice in advance of the
sale**. **We cannot pay for a referral if you
notify us after the sale.**
*Subject to restrictions

Stratford EDI software
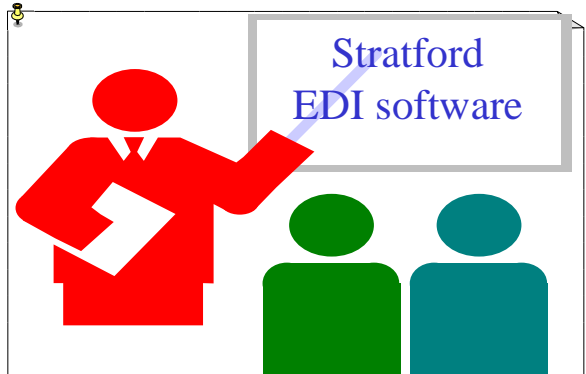
INTERNET RESOURCES

We are less than 70 days away from January 1, 2000, so here are some web sites with relevant information:

http://www.hcfa.gov/y2k

http://www.y2k.com (this will transfer you to cnet.com)

http://www.year2000.com

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

http://www.microsoft.com/y2k/

We would appreciate hearing from you regarding any specific concerns you may have regarding Stratford, Y2K, etc. Please email to

y2k@stratfordsoftware.com

Stratford Newsletter

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New Software Sales Only (800) 274-4594