

# STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Practice Management Software

January 2000

**W**e survived! The Y2K bug did not destroy the world.

*stratford notes* We are here and ready to support you Monday, January 3rd, 2000. Remember, the fastest way to get service now is to use email.

If you don't have an email account, now is a good time to set one up. You can probably get free Internet access in your area. To get a list of companies that offer free Internet access, you can go to the AltaVista site: [www.av.com](http://www.av.com) and in the search box type "free internet". Be sure to use the quote marks. This will give you many options. Most of the sites listed will also give you free email. Other places to get free email include Microsoft's offering at [www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com)

You can also go to [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) and of course, you could type "free email" in the search box at [www.av.com](http://www.av.com).

If you know of a good Internet service and would like us to recommend it to our customers, send it to us by email at: [internet@stratfordsoftware.com](mailto:internet@stratfordsoftware.com)

We will be attempting to get all Stratford customers on the Internet in the year 2000.

It is important that you get connected to the Internet this year. We had articles last year about some payers that are requiring claims to be sent by email attachment. We were going to offer a service that would allow you to send the claims to us by di-

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Stratford has nearly **4,100** licensed users

rect connection like all EDI claims were sent in the past and then we would forward your claims to the payer. The payers do not want us to do this because of the potential liability, lost claims, etc and we agree. We are in the process of getting all the providers who now transmit to us changed to a direct email connection.

We believe that Medicare will begin using the Internet for claims in the future. We have at least one Medicare contractor who is testing now. There are many others who have pilot programs to evaluate various encryption methods, etc. The problems should all be solved in the next 2 years and then they will probably discontinue direct submissions.

**Pre-paid** support customers may use email for fastest response:

**[support@stratfordsoftware.com](mailto:support@stratfordsoftware.com)**

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

## ***Training Classes*** ***SHS Software Basic Training***

In the Stratford Classroom:

By Appointment only                      \$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*).

### **FROM THE EDI CORNER .....**

#### **Internet electronic claims...**

Have you set up an account with an Internet service provider? We recommend that you do this as soon as possible. We will be giving sources for Internet access in our newsletter almost every month this year. This will allow you to get support the fastest possible way. It will also allow us to send you updates almost instantly and make the installation simple. It will avoid the problems with diskettes and CD ROMS. •

#### **EMAIL SUPPORT**

We are beginning to get a significant number of people using email for some of their support.

We have received some great comments from people who had their email questions answered late at night and on the weekends. While this is not really part of our company policy, we are doing it as a test, for now. Since we do not need to be at the office to answer email, it is easy to answer a few questions while checking personal email at any time. This is the really great advantage of email. You can send it anytime and you can receive it

anytime. Answering email requires no phone calls and no concern about being too late or too early. We are planning to expand our email coverage over the coming year. We welcome any suggestions you may have. We are especially interested in any reasons that you have for not using it or any bad experiences you may have had, whether related to Stratford or not.

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](mailto:hotmail.com), [yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto:support@stratfordsoftware.com)

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

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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.

## HIPAA WHAT IS IT?

HIPAA is legislation passed by the US congress in 1988. The focus is on the security of "Health Information", defined to mean any information (whether oral or recorded in any medium) that relates to an individual and healthcare. This includes the individual's physical or mental health, provision of healthcare to the individual, or payment for the provision of healthcare to an individual. Since this is a pretty broad definition, we can probably assume that it will cover the transmission of electronic claims. Remember that electronic claims have much more than a dollar amount requested from a payer. It has the date of service, procedure, diagnosis and often has comments.

We will limit our discussion to a few items which may affect users of Stratford Software. We plan more articles on this subject in the coming year.

What is Stratford doing about HIPAA? Well, as usual we are trying to stay ahead of the technical requirements. Since Stratford really has nothing to do with the entry and transmission of the healthcare claim, we can only hope that part of the process is handled correctly. For example, the provider must do the obvious regarding hiring people who will respect the confidentiality of healthcare records. As far as the transmission of claims, the provider will be required to use whatever is mandated by the payer and/or Federal Government. Stratford will play a role in creating software that will allow the collection and storage of medical information on the provider's computer. In addition,

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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.



Stratford will create software that formats the healthcare information according to the specifications of the Federal Government. For example, Stratford coded a format called ANSI X.12 version 4010 more than one year ago. Specifically we have the transaction set 837 ready to be tested at this time. We also can begin testing transactions sets 270/271/835 and others on short notice.

We are not aware of any payers who are actually accepting claims in this version at this time, but we have been discussing testing procedures with several Medicare contractors. We expect to have our software fully tested and approved soon. As usual, when the version is approved, we will begin putting all new customers on it immediately. Existing customers who are successfully using an older version will be converted when the customer or payer requests it. As in the past, if we get notice that an older version will no longer be accepted, all customers with continuing software support will be converted. It is important that you have software support so we can track your needs. •

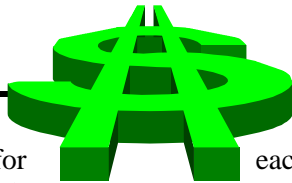
## SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.

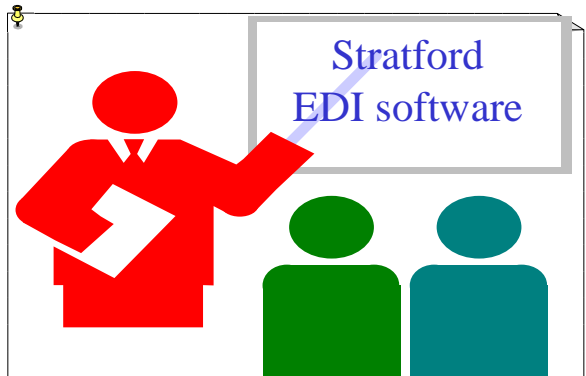
At this time we can deliver support by email. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than faxing us. This is not very good support if you need a quick answer. We do not get very many support email messages so we only check the mail two or three times each day. As the volume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



## INTERNET RESOURCES

Here are some sources for free email taken from [www.altavista.com](http://www.altavista.com) by entering "free email". Be sure to read the contract to be sure it is really free and that it is what you want.

[www.hotmail.com](http://www.hotmail.com)

[www.microav.com](http://www.microav.com) (Internet access & email)

[www.netaddress.com](http://www.netaddress.com)

[www.apexmail.com](http://www.apexmail.com)

[www.arealcity.com](http://www.arealcity.com)

[www.bigfoot.com](http://www.bigfoot.com)

[www.byke.com](http://www.byke.com)

[home.crosswinds.net](http://home.crosswinds.net)

[www.ecosse.net](http://www.ecosse.net)

### *Stratford Newsletter*

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*Stratford Software, Inc.*

*840 Mitten Road*

*Burlingame, CA 94010-1304*

*Phone (650) 692-7970*

*Fax (650) 692-1073*

*Prepaid Voice Support Only (800) 274-4868*

*Internet: [mail@stratfordsoftware.com](mailto:mail@stratfordsoftware.com)*

*<http://www.stratfordsoftware.com/>*

*New Software Sales Only (800) 274-4594*