

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Practice Management Software

March 2000

stratford notes

We hope all our customer's computers had the date February 29 the day after February 28 and not March 1. This is the final (at least as far as we know) major Y2K related issue for computers. We got through the first two months of the year 2000 with no problems reported from any of our customers.

We are having good luck getting more customers to use email for support. Have you tried it yet? If you have anything negative to report, please let us know. So far, all the reports we have received have been very positive. We get a lot of people who write things like "I didn't realize it was so easy and fast or I would have started using it last year". See the last page for a list of some companies that can provide you with free Internet access and free email. We want to know about your experiences with any of these vendors so we can use the information to help other customers.

Here is some news regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). It seems that most of the issues related to HIPAA were put on hold because of Y2K potential problems. Since Y2K has turned out to be a non-issue for most people, HIPAA is back on track, just a little delayed. The present target date for implementation of HIPAA changes is February 2002. That may seem like a long time in the future, but there are a lot of changes that are required. You will probably receive multiple updates to your software between now and then. We will do

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Stratford has nearly **4,200** licensed users

our best to stay several months ahead of any required changes.

We coded version 4010 of the ANSI specs in 1998 and all our customers with a support agreement have it now. We should begin testing soon with at least two Medicare contractors. This version will replace all other formats as far as we know. We started converting our customers from the old, outdated NSF to ANSI in 1994 soon after we were approved to use it. This has turned out to be a very good decision, since we only have a few hundred customers left using NSF to transmit claims. We should be able to convert everyone to ANSI in the next two years without any major difficulties. If you are presently using NSF and you are certain that your payer can accept ANSI and you want to change, please let us know. •

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

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

Since Healtheon has reached an agreement with Envoy/NEIC, none of our customers will need to change clearinghouses as they may have been previously told. If you are in the process of changing from Envoy/NEIC to Uniprise (a UnitedHealth Group company), please contact us before you do anything. You probably won't need make any changes. Healtheon/WebMD has agreements in place for UnitedHealthcare Electronic Data Interchange Services with most EDI Submitters. You may submit claims for UnitedHealthcare through any of Healtheon's partners, now including Envoy/NEIC or you can send directly to Healtheon/WebMD. Stratford can support all of these clearinghouses/payers. Please let us know if you are having any problems or have any questions about this. We will try to clear up any confusion. •

EMAIL SUPPORT

This year we will be making many changes to make it easier for our customers to receive high quality, speedy support using the Internet. If you have email capability and wish to try it for support, please do it now. Just send your email to

support@stratfordsoftware.com.

If you just want to see how fast we respond, you are welcome to send an email asking for a test response. We would like to receive any comments you have about our Internet support. •

NEIC CLAIMS

NEIC does not charge Stratford customers a setup fee or per-claim fee for most claims. Because of this, we continue to get more customers changing from their current clearinghouse to NEIC. •

PASSWORD CHANGES

If your Medicare contractor (or any other payer) is planning to change to a new transmission procedure that will require you to change your password every 30 days, do not be concerned. Stratford has had this capability in place and working for many payers for many years. Our automated password change capability requires that you use PCPlus at this time. Our automated script will create a new password for you that meets the payer requirements. The software will remember the password and avoid using the same password again for 13 months or whatever time limit your payer may require.

If you have PCPlus, you may contact us and receive a new script tailored specifically for your Medicare contractor. This is included in your software support agreement and there is no extra charge. •

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.

STRATFORD'S INTERNET RELATED PLANS

In recent newsletters, we have used this page to talk about how our support department uses the Internet. As most of you have probably noticed, we have been moving the company more toward being an "Internet Company" ever since we put up our web site in 1993. We were one of the first, if not the first, practice management company to have our own web site. You may not have noticed, but we even changed the name of the company to match our web site name in 1999.

The healthcare market is under extreme pressure to lower costs. The best way to do that is through better communication. For example, we believe that if all our customers used the Internet exclusively for receiving updates and support, our costs (and your support fees) could be reduced significantly. This will probably happen in the next ten years.

Healthcare Internet-related commerce will be as much as 370 billion dollars in 2004 according to a recent research report. Providers transactions will be primarily involved in purchasing supplies and filing insurance claims and receiving claim status. The report expects as much as 12% of all physician purchasing will be done on the Internet in 2004.

With our new Windows-only software product, we are putting an enormous amount of resources into supporting traditional dial-up connections with payer bulletin boards so our providers can transmit

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.



claims. If we only had to connect our providers to the Internet for all claim transmissions, we could probably reduce our development costs and time by 30% to 40%.

Unfortunately, there is a lot of talk about transmitting claims via the Internet, but very few payers can actually receive claims from any provider in high volume this way today. The only thing that will make this happen quickly is for the cost of DSL and/or cable modems to be much lower than they are now. Many doctor's offices can't even get high speed Internet connectivity for one reason or another.

Here at Stratford, all our employees have high speed access to the Internet, but that is our business and the cost is easy to justify. For a provider office to pay \$39 to \$120 per month is not reasonable because there is no payback. If the provider only transmits claims, then there are many companies that will give free access to the Internet and it is something that the provider should do today. See the back page for a list of some companies that offer free or low-cost dial-up Internet connectivity.

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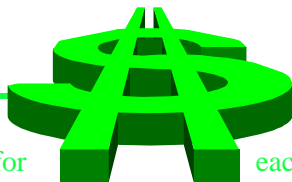
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.

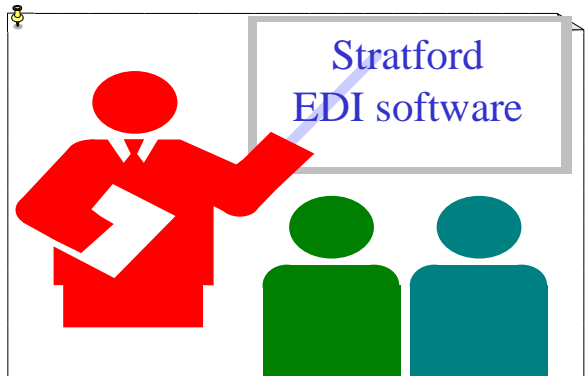
We are interested in hearing from people who would like to receive support by email. •



Stratford you \$100 for you refer who 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

will pay each person* purchases



INTERNET RESOURCES

Here are some sources for free email taken from 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.freei.net (Internet access & email)

www.juno.com (Internet access & email)

www.microav.com (Internet access & email)

www.hotmail.com

www.arealcity.com

www.bigfoot.com

www.byke.com

home.crosswinds.net

www.ecosse.net

www.excite.com

Stratford Newsletter

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