

# STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Practice Management Software

August 2000

## *stratford notes*

This newsletter and probably newsletters for several more months will concentrate on the new Stratford program which is in the final phases of beta testing.

As reported in the May newsletter, we have had so many requests for an improved scheduler that we pushed it up on the priority list. The scheduler was successfully added to the beta in June. In July we were able to get all the obvious cosmetic problems out and even add a few more things. Several users have emailed requests for changes that will appear in August. If you are in the beta program and want to have a say in how it works and how it looks, now is the time.

We plan to start on the communications upgrade for the new program beginning in August. Although we are not aware of any payers who use the Internet for accepting claims from all their providers, we are certain this will be coming soon and we want to have the capability in place. We believe that EDS will implement Internet claims for their California Medicaid (Medi-Cal) contract soon.

We will be rewriting all our scripts so that our users will no longer need PCPlus or any other third party communication program. There may still be a few payers with unusual bulletin boards or protocols that will require PCPlus, but we are pretty certain that we will be able to fully automate the transfer of claims for most payers. After the release of the new program,

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Stratford has nearly **4,300** licensed users

we will implement our new communications for all Medicare contractors as well as NEIC and Healthcon. We will make any necessary changes for other payers and clearinghouses depending on the need and number of users that request it.

We need more databases to test our new program. If you are willing to send us your data to use for testing, please let us know. We are especially interested in larger databases (250 megabytes or more) and subspecialties such as ambulance and dialysis. We are also interested in databases that have been modified by third-party developers. We are willing to add a certain amount of customizing code to our data conversion program to be sure all your old data comes into the new program correctly. •

**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 .....**

Blue Cross of California will begin testing the ANSI X.12 version 4010 program beginning the first 2 weeks of August. •

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NHIC plans to begin testing the Stratford ANSI X.12 version 4010 program in the next five weeks.

### **HOLIDAYS FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR**

Labor Day	September 4, 2000
Thanksgiving	November 23 & 24, 2000
Christmas	December 25, 2000
New Years	January 1, 2001

Did this year go fast for anyone else? •

### **WHAT IS A HCFA PIM?**

A PIM is the Medicare Program Integrity Manual. Remember those instructions you get from the various Medicare Contractors? The ones that tell you the rules for billing Medicare. If you are located where

you provide services to patients from more than one state, you may have had to follow different instructions depending on the state that received the claims because Medicare contractors had different rules. In some locations such as Las Vegas, Nv you may have had to bill contractors in Nevada, Arizona and 2 different contractors in California. Well that is in the past. Now there is only one manual for the entire country and it is not available in printed form anymore. You must get your copy from the Internet. This is the future.

**See the back page of this newsletter for the Internet address of the PIM.**

If you don't have an Internet connection in your office, now is the time to consider getting it. In many areas you can get DSL or a cable modem for \$39.95 per month.

An Internet connection would also allow you to get your updates from Stratford anytime without any worry about the floppy diskette not reading correctly or shipping costs & delays. We now have many customers who download updates from our website. If you have DSL or a cable modem, you can have an update installed in your computer in less than five minutes. For example, we have customers who email a request for support such as the need for a new template so they can transmit directly to an HMO/PPO/Payer in their area. We build the template as usual. Instead of mailing it, we send an email with a 'link' to the template. Instead of having to wait 3 - 7 days and pay shipping costs, you can have the update installed and working the same day. •

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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.

## STRATFORD'S NEW PROGRAM

Here are some questions and answers about the new program in 'beta' now.

Q: I heard from a beta user that the new program runs slower than the dos compiled program that we are running now. Is that true?

A: . Given exactly the same hardware, probably. The reason is straight forward. The dos program does not have all those beautiful graphical windows and beautiful colors. Those things of beauty are bigger and take up more space than the simple things. It takes longer to get big things off your hard drive and display them on your screen. That is the simple (and quite correct) answer.

Of course, there is more to the story (an old saying). The new program accesses data using something called views. This is slower, but has many advantages. If you have a large network with a lot of people using the Stratford program at the same time, it is possible that two people might work in the same patient account at the same time. If one person was changing the home address, another person could not enter a charge. In other words, many people could look at the patient information but only one person could make changes at a time. There is no such restriction in the new program. In fact, it is possible for two people to enter charges in the same patient account at the same time.

There is another major advantage in using views for our very large networked customers. While it may be somewhat slower on very small networks, it tends to keep

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Fax your ad to us at (650) 692-1073.



the same speed as you add more users. We have not fully tested the program under heavy load, but theoretically you should be able to have 20 or 100 or 200 or even 600+ simultaneous users with little if any speed penalty. Of course that many users will necessarily require more powerful hardware to even work at all. The point is that the software should not create a bottleneck. We will see if that is true. Later on, several months after we release the program and get through the initial heavier than usual support load, we will be converting many data tables, more than 100, into SQL format. This should help with the speed and number of possible users. We will distribute the program using MSDE. This is a technology from Microsoft that will allow you to have a 100% compatible SQL system with no additional cost for up to 5 users. If you have more than that you will need to purchase SQL as a separate add-on to the operating system from Microsoft. Depending on the support requirements for large networks, Stratford will probably offer a separate support contract for those large installations who do not have access to a network support company or person. •

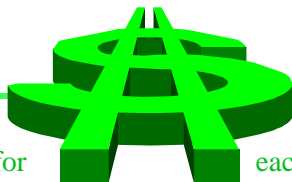
## SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.

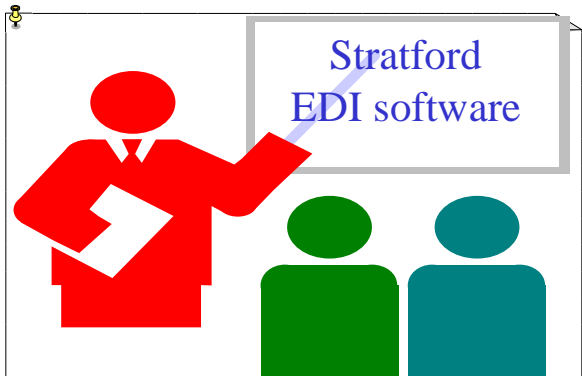
At this time we can deliver support by email. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than faxing us. This is not very good support if you need a quick answer. We do not get very many support email messages so we only check the mail two or three times each day. As the volume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



## INTERNET RESOURCES

You can get the HCFA PIM mentioned on page 2 at this address:

[http://www.hcfa.gov/pubforms/83\\_pim/pimtoc.htm](http://www.hcfa.gov/pubforms/83_pim/pimtoc.htm)

The chapters are in different files so you only need to download the ones that apply to you.

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

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

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

[www.get2net.com](http://www.get2net.com)

### *Stratford Newsletter*

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