

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Practice Management Software

January 2002

This newsletter has more information about our new “windows-only” software. You can try it out by letting us know that you want to be on our “windows list”. Please send an email to rc1@stratfordsoftware.com

stratford notes

2002 is the year that the HIPAA regulations take effect as far as most of your billing activities. Beginning October 1, 2002 you are required to bill in the ANSI X.12 v4010 format. If you are a Stratford Software user, you already have this format if you subscribe to our software support. You will need several updates in 2002 as we keep up with the regulations as they are finalized. Beginning now, we are fully compliant as far as the specs that we have received. This newsletter has information on the new CPT code structure that must be used. At this time we are updating all customers who subscribe to our software support at least once per quarter. We will modify this schedule as required to keep those customer current.

Please read the news about new CPT codes in the ‘More Support Notes’ on page 2. You may need to receive an update immediately and not wait for the regular update shipment. If you do not subscribe to software support, you will not be able to enter some CPT codes that are being implemented beginning January 1, 2002.

There may be many updates to the software this year as we keep up with the HIPAA finalized specs. •

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Stratford has more than **4,600** licensed users

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

2002 Holidays

New Year's Day	January 1	Tuesday *
Martin L King, Jr.	January 21	Monday
Lincoln's Birthday	February 12	Tuesday
Presidents Day	February 18	Monday *
Good Friday	March 29	Friday
Cesar Chavez Day	April 1	Monday
Memorial Day	May 27	Monday *
Independence Day	July 4	Thursday *
Labor Day	September 2	Monday *
Cal. Admission	September 9	Monday
Columbus Day	October 14	Monday
Veterans Day	November 11	Monday
Thanksgiving Day	November 28	Thursday *
Thanksgiving +1	November 29	Friday*
Christmas Day	December 25	Wednesday *

* Observed by Stratford—Support calls received but not returned until next business day.
California admission day (9/9) may not be observed in your state.

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

support@stratfordsoftware.com

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

In the Stratford Classroom
by Appointment only \$275

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 only*).

FROM THE EDI CORNER

Stratford is fully compliant with the new HIPAA federal law as it applies to software vendors like us. We are ready to test our ANSI X.12 version 4010 format with any payer.

You can transmit claims direct to Trigon using ftp.

You can transmit claims direct to Florida Medicare for UB-92 billing. •

MORE SUPPORT NOTES

NEW CPT CODES are being implemented by Medicare beginning January 1, 2002. You may be required to enter an 'alpha' character in the 5th position. In the future, an alpha character may be required in any of the 5 positions. An update will be required in order to do this as our current edits will prevent it. As you probably realize, all procedure codes required through December 31, 2001 may only have digits in the 2nd through 5th positions and that is the design of our current software. If you are required to use these codes, be sure to notify Stratford support

as soon as possible and do not wait for the regular update shipment. •

CD Updates are now being shipped to our clients at least once per quarter. In the past our updates were sent out on an irregular schedule. We used our database to determine who needed an update. We keep a record of what parts of the program are used. What we have found is that many of our customers do things which are not in our database. Examples are customers who have a local dealer that knows how to set up the scripts for the Stratford program. Our new system of insuring that each customer gets an update at least once per 90 days should eliminate these exceptions. This service is only available if you subscribe to software support continuously and accept updates on CD. •

A new manual format is available. If you have wanted a manual that would lay flat on the table and have pages that could be removed, you can now have it. We have a new vendor that is supplying the manual in a small 3-ring binder format. It looks like the old manual in size and design but is much more convenient to use. The price is \$25 (+tax&shipping). •

Your billing data entry must be compliant with the law. In the federal government fiscal year 2001 ended October 2001 the Department of Justice collected 1.2 Billion dollars from healthcare related settlements and judgments. That was a record breaking year as was 2000. Familiarize yourself with the HIPAA regulations regarding appropriate billing and refunds. •

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.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT STRATFORD SOFTWARE

Q: I received information from my local HMO regarding the new HIPAA regulations. I understand that it will take effect in 2002. They said that if my software vendor is not compliant I should begin looking around for new software. Are you now compliant? Where does Stratford stand on this issue?

A: Yes. Our software is compliant with the specs that have been released to date. The latest update to the software was made in December 2001. We will continue to modify the software as required by the federal government. Stratford has been distributing the ANSI X.12 with all our software updates since April 1993. The new version is not a radical change for us. In fact, it is just an ordinary update. Our software has had years to become completely stable and reliable with this format. If you look at old newsletters you will see that we have been moving our customers to this format for many years. We plan to remain fully compliant with HIPAA in the future. You should understand that we expect the implementation details to change many times this year as the regulations takes effect. We expect the government to make small, required changes to make the law work for most people. Stratford will remain compliant both with the current 'dos-compiled' program as well as the new 'Windows-only' program. We recommend that all customers subscribe to our software support on a continuous basis for the next 2 to 3 years in order to be certain that they have the latest 'general' updates and have available

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.



updates that may be required for a specific specialty.

Q: My specialty is pediatrics. I don't have anything to do with Medicare billing. Doesn't that mean that HIPAA will not affect me and my practice.

A: No. the new law affects all healthcare specialties, physician, dentist, rural health, DME, dialysis, etc. If you provide services to patients or have anything to do with patient information, billing claims, etc., the new law affects you and you are required to comply with the terms.

Q: Are you saying that if I use Stratford software and keep it updated that my office will be HIPAA compliant?

A: Our software will make sure your billing format is correct only. Your software and billing formats are just one part of the HIPAA regulations. You are required to do whatever is necessary to limit access to patient information in your office as well as other things. For example, if your computer display is placed where an unauthorized person can see the demographics of a patient, you are probably in violation of the law. This is just one point. Stratford is not able to make advise you regarding the law. We recommend you attend a seminar or read the law. •

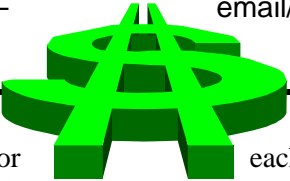
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 1 **Email requests for support get Priority Service.**
- 2 **If you send an Email or fax with a description of the problem, your call is given priority over other Emails and faxes.**
- 3 **Do not call more than one time. The second call places your first call at the bottom of our callback list.**

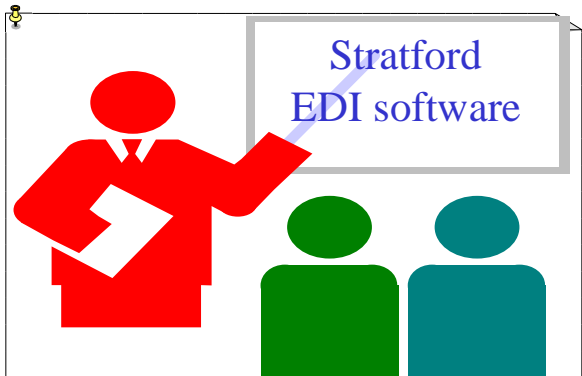
We can receive many support requests in the first few hours each day. It usually is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call. If you just call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the callback list. We must do everything we 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 best by email. If you check your email each day, you may find this to be easier than faxing us. We check our email constantly — at least every 5 minutes. We are putting most of our resources into email and other methods that utilize the Internet. If you have an ICQ number, we can support it. Let us know.

We are interested in hearing from people who would like to receive support by Internet — email/ICQ, etc.

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

Most healthcare providers will receive more information than they want about the HIPAA law this year. A site we like is maintained by the California Healthcare Foundation. They have a large research report as well as a powerpoint presentation available. Their main web site is:

www.chcf.org

There is a healthcare tool kit available. Click on "eHealth Reports". Then click on "HIPAA Implementation Tool Kit." There you will find several links to the powerpoint presentation as well as a document in pdf format.

Please let us know about any sites you have found.

Stratford Newsletter

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