stratford notes

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

Last month we mentioned about how you can auto-pay your bill by having a credit card on file. If we charge you for a full year in a single payment, you receive the 11 & 12 months at no charge. Several customers said we should mention it more often. If they had known earlier, they would have signed up a long time ago. So, we will mention it again this month.

In previous newsletters we have discussed HIPAA and how it may affect you. As most people know the law takes effect beginning October 2002—that's correct, only about five months from now. What most people do not know is that President signed in a law that gives an extension of one year to medical practices. What you need to know is that this extension is only available to people who apply for it. Stratford customers do not need to worry about the transaction formatting part of the law because the Stratford program is already fully compliant with the required format as far as the specifications that are available to us at this time.

Windows XP: If you have any problems setting up the dos program on a new computer that has Windows XP, be sure you let us know. We have had reports of various problems on certain brands of computers, while others seem to work per-

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

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- From the EDI corner
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- Questions and Answers about the new version of Windows-Only Stratford Software
- Software Support Notes
- Internet Resources

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

fectly. Please note that we have a new printing module available that is going out with our standard updates now at no additional charge (if you are a regular subscriber, of course). This is the beginning of the integration of MS Windows code with our current dos-compiled program. There will be many more upgrades to the program to make sure it works well with newer operating systems and hardware. Another problem that has been reported by some customers is low performance on large networks where WinXP is on the server. We have found that these networks do not have IPX protocol that was probably installed on the upgraded computer. If this is a problem for you, check to be sure. More information is available inside this newsletter. •

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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 Florida Medicare for UB-92 billing.

We have successfully semi-automated the Internet claims transmission to EDS Medi-Cal/Medicaid. •

MORE SUPPORT NOTES

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). •

Shipping charges (UPS, etc) have increased. If you can accept your software updates on CD, we will send it by USPS and the charges are very reasonable. Of course paper shipments will increase. Our prices are still much lower than office products stores even with increased shipping. •

Win2000, XP As we have already stated, we will support these operating systems. We will try to support WinME, however, we cannot recommend it to anyone for any purpose. We continue to use Windows 98 on most of our computers because it seems to be the most stable and trouble-free. We believe that Win98SE is the best operating system that Microsoft has developed. That said, yes, we do have systems with WinME, Win2000, and WinXP. They all run our software just fine with no problems. However, they all have problems with most other software and we cannot use them for day-to-day activity in our company. If all you do is run the Stratford program, then you will be ok. If you run a combination of other programs and you have a choice of operating systems, we recommend that you select Win 98SE, second, pick WinXP. •

CD Updates are now being shipped to our clients at least once per quarter. Our new system of insuring that each customer gets an update at least once per 90 days should help eliminate most payer claim rejections. This service is only available if you subscribe to software support continuously and accept updates on CD. •

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 have been transmitting claims to Medicare and Medicaid in my states for many years. Now I would like to start transmitting private claims. What are my options with my Stratford program?

A: You have many options with the Stratford program. EDI (electronic data interchange) is our specialty. Your options will depend on your location and the payers that your patient population uses for their healthcare coverage. For example, in California you can transmit directly to Blue Cross and Blue Shield (2 different payers in California; not a single organization as in some other states).

Some payers, especially local HMO's and similar organizations, cannot accept claims directly and require you to transmit to a clearinghouse. The clearinghouse then 'translates' the claims as required by the payer. In some cases, the clearinghouse may even check the claims for accuracy and do some reformatting depending on your specialty. This is all 'transparent' to you and is determined by the arrangement that the payer has with the clearinghouse.

The Stratford program can format your claims for transmission to most major clearinghouses in the United States as well as all Medicare contractors in the United States. We also can format correctly for many of the Medicaid, BC and BS programs, even local 'pilot' programs that some states have set up. Be sure to

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.

ask if you have any special needs. We will try to accommodate your needs.

Q: What clearinghouse does Stratford recommend. As in the previous question, we format for many different clearinghouses and it is up to you to determine which clearinghouse is best for you. The most important consideration, of course, is that the clearinghouse can accept claims for the payers that your patient population uses. Another important factor is the cost involved. Most clearinghouse are now charging for processing claims now, even though they did not in the past. This is probably due to reduced payments from the payer to the clearinghouse. For example, ProxyMed is a major clearinghouse in the United States, possibly the largest, or at least they have the largest selection of payers that are accepted. You can use ProxyMed in all states and the cost is very low, much lower than some other clearinghouses. If you don't know which clearinghouse to use, you could check out www.proxymed.com and see if they will work for you. If so, we will assist you in getting started. Just email or fax to Stratford's support group. •
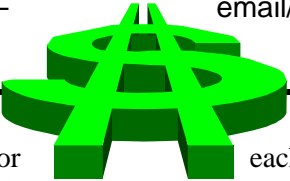
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

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.
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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
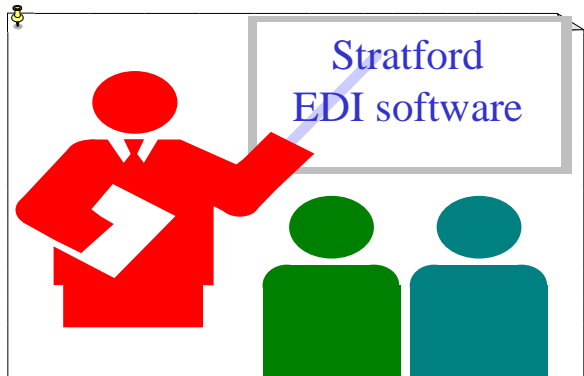
INTERNET RESOURCES

Most healthcare providers will receive more information than they want about the HIPAA law this year. Here is a link to the amendment to the new law.

http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c107:H.R.3323.ENR:

(Note: be sure to put the colon at the end of this link)

Please let us know about any sites you have found.

Stratford Newsletter
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