

STRATFORD

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Healthcare EDI and Practice Management

April 2003

stratford notes

Our user meeting in Las Vegas was on March 21 & 22 (Friday evening and Saturday morning). The meeting was great. We will have more information, about the meeting on our web site. We may have another user meeting this year, possibly in about 6-8 months. November is a good time to be in Las Vegas. Let us know if you are interested by email:
lasvegas@stratfordsoftware.com

The meeting focused on the windows version of our program. We picked up many excellent suggestions. You will see several changes this month that reflect the requests we received. If you subscribe to our software support, you may receive the windows version anytime. Just request it by going to our web site and selecting the download menu, then 'trial version'. Fill out the form and we can send it to you on CD or you can download it. You can run it on your computer at the same time as the dos version. You can automatically convert your existing data. You can continue to work in the dos program, if you wish, and there will be no changes because of running the windows version. •

CMS (was HCFA) announced increased physician fees for 2003—an average of 1.6 percent beginning March 1. Most of you are aware that fees were supposed to be reduced 4.4 percent. Because of the recent Congressional action, future years will see increases also. In 2002, the conversion factor was \$36.20 and in 2003 it is now \$36.79. Because of this change, you have until April 14th to decide whether to 'participate'. •

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Stratford has more than **4,900** licensed users

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

Stratford's software is now officially HIPAA compliant. If you subscribe to our software support on a continuing basis, you will receive an update automatically that will convert you to the compliant version in about one minute, depending on the speed of your hardware. •

Each month more of our customers take advantage of this way to cut your support costs. **You can auto-pay your bill by having credit card information on file.** If you pay for a full year in advance, you receive the 11th & 12th months at no charge. You will continue to get a fully itemized monthly statement and newsletter. •

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. •

We were recently approved by Sutter Connect – Sacramento CA. We are presently testing for HIPAA with NHIC — Southern California, , Medi-Cal / Central Coast Alliance—CA / Santa Cruz CA, Riverbend Medicare Part A—Tennessee, Noridian (Medicare contractor for several states), Trail Blazer—Virginia Medicare, XACT—Pennsylvania Medicare, Administar—Indiana, WPS—Wisconsin, Florida Medicare Part A, Palmetto / Railroad Medicare, CA Blue Cross / professional & institutional and others.

ProxyMed (a clearinghouse that we recommend) will be able to accept UB-92 claims as well as dental claims in the future. They accept v4010 now. They will process Aetna claims at no charge now. •

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

MORE SUPPORT NOTES

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. •

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 have increased. If you can accept your software updates on CD, we will send it by US mail and the charges are very reasonable. Of course paper shipment charges will increase. •

Do you have a HIPAA compliant 'privacy' notice? We have heard that some plaintiff lawyers are planting patients in doctors' offices with appointments after April 14th. If no Notice of Privacy Practices is provided, the doctor will be named in a class action suit. Be sure you comply. •

Your clearinghouse may have setup fees and/or charge you for EDI claims, but Stratford does not. •

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 just came back from a seminar on HIPAA. I am wondering about my relationship with Stratford since you provide me with software. I, of course, use your software to do my billing. That billing information contains a patient's diagnosis code as well as my procedure code. Technically that seems like it would be 'protected patient information' under the HIPAA definition. Do I need a special 'Business Associate' contract with Stratford? Also, I use the 'Notes' area of the Stratford program to record office notes, which I am pretty sure would be 'confidential/protected' information in many cases. At least, I certainly would not want that information released without a court order.

A: Our answer is "No, we do not think so" because Stratford cannot access its client's patient information. In December 2002 there is 'OCR Guidance' that, we believe, is on this specific point. Here is an excerpt (we cannot give you legal advice, so you are on your own for interpretation):

"The mere selling or providing of software to a covered entity does not give rise to a business associate relationship if the vendor does not have access to the protected health information of the covered entity. If the vendor does need access to the protected health information of the covered entity in order to provide its service, the vendor would be a business associate of the covered entity. For example, a software company that hosts the software containing patient information on its own

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.



server or accesses patient information when troubleshooting the software function, is a business associate of a covered entity. In these examples, a covered entity would be required to enter into a business associate agreement before allowing the software company access to protected health information. However, when an employee of a contractor, like a software or information technology vendor, has his or her primary duty station on-site at a covered entity, the covered entity may choose to treat the employee of the vendor as a member of the covered entity's workforce, rather than as a business associate. See the definition of "workforce" at 45 CFR 160.103."

On our web site, we have posted our **HIPAA-BA agreement** that you can use if we ever did need to get access to your data for testing. It is in 'PDF' format. Just download it, print 2 copies, sign them and send to us. We will return a signed copy for your files. •

CLAIM TRANSMISSION WITHOUT PROCOMM

You can transmit to many payers without Procomm and other 3rd party software. •

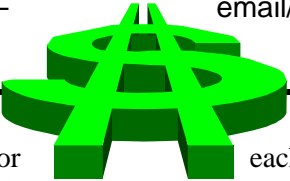
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

- 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.**

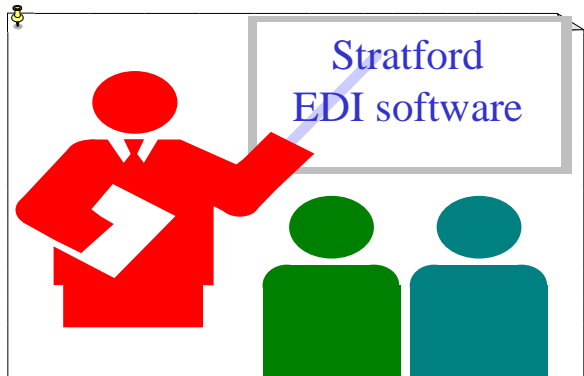
We can receive many support requests in the first few hours each day. It usually is not possible for us to have a technical support person waiting to take your call. If you just call and leave the message "please call", your call is placed at the bottom of the callback list. We must do everything we 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

◆ Health & Human Services 'what's new' page: (required reading, folks)
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/whatsnew.html>

◆ Medicare & You 2003. This is a handbook from Medicare about your (patient's) rights:

<http://www.medicare.gov/publications/pubs/pdf/10050.pdf>

◆ Want a Medicare fee schedule for 2003? Download AddendumB.zip from:

<http://www.cms.gov/REGULATIONS/PFS/>

◆ The inquirer is a web site with information about future technology (and other things, of course) Read about 1.5 TB DVD by 2010. By 2010 computers should have the processing power of a bumble bee.

[Http://www.theinquirer.net/](http://www.theinquirer.net/)

The Stratford HIPAA-BA agreement is on our web site. Download it, sign, send to us and we will return a copy for your records.

Stratford Newsletter

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