stratford notes

Your clearinghouse connection may stop working before the end of JUNE. Be sure you check with Stratford support. You may need an update. There is no extra charge for it. It is included in software support. We sent out a letter to all the people that need an update according to our records. However, we have already found customers who do need the update and did not receive the letter. Please check to be sure. Don't wait until your claims are rejected. If you use ProxyMed, you won't have any trouble.

Taxonomy codes: You must have updated codes or your claims will be rejected after June 16th. You can access the most recent list here: http://www.wpc-edi.com/organizations_40.asp If you need a software update, please let us know.

HIPAA—business associate agreements. The most common question (probably) was "do I need a 'BA' agreement from Stratford?". Our answer is that we can't provide legal advice. Our opinion is that you do not unless you send some of your patient data to us for testing. Unless you do send data to us, we have no access to it. Please visit our web site for a lot of information on HIPAA. If you believe you need a BA agreement from Stratford please download it from our web site or request it from the support group. Please do not send a copy of an agreement you picked up at a meeting or got from a brochure. We cannot sign any agreement unless we are certain that it complies with the federal laws. The only agreement that we are certain does comply is the one supplied by the government.

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

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

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. •

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

support@stratfordsoftware.com
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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-A1 format with any payer. •

We are now approved for v4010-A1 by New England NHIC, So Cal NHIC, Blue Cross CA, Sutter Connect – Sacramento CA.

We are presently testing for v4010-A1 Mass Health & Value Options, Rengence Blue Cross, and New York Medicare, (EmpireMedicare), NHIC — No California (probably passed by the time you read this), Blue Shield of CA, 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, and others.

ProxyMed (a clearinghouse that we recommend) will send your claims at no charge except for government claims: Medicare, Medicaid, railroad, DME, and payers that don't cooperate with clearinghouses. Of course, with Stratford software, you can send direct to Medicare at no charge.

ProxyMed will be able to accept UB-92 claims as well as dental claims in the future. They accept v4010 now. ProxyMed 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). •

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 patients 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

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.•
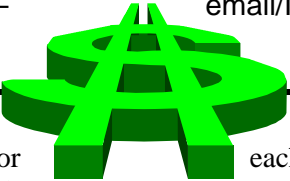
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

1   **Email requests for support get <u>Priority</u> <u>Service</u>.**

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.**
*<u>Subject to restrictions</u>

Stratford
EDI software
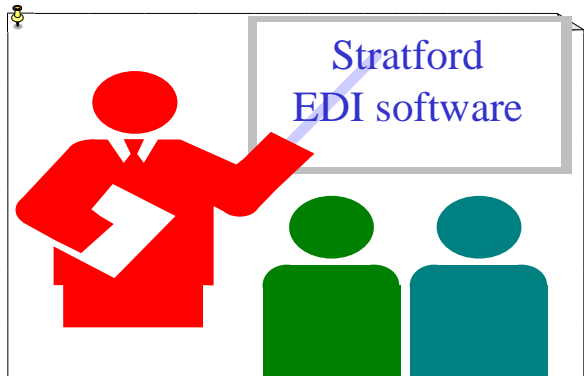
INTERNET RESOURCES

HIPAA—October 15th will be here soon. Do you need to update your clearinghouse connection?

♦ HIPAA—Privacy rule summary
http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacysummary.pdf

♦ HIPAA—Frequently Asked Questions, etc.
http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/

♦ Most recent taxonomy codes:
http://www.wpc-edi.com/organizations_40.asp

♦ HIPAA—filing a complaint
http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/howtofileprivacy.htm

♦ HIPAA— money penalties
http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/moneypenalties.html

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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.