STRATFORD

stratford notes

October 16th is the day you must send claims to all payers and clearinghouses in the HIPAA approved format. If you don't, you may have your claims rejected. A clearinghouse may convert your claims automatically (for a price) but maybe not. We recommend that you monitor your claim transmission status closely for the next few months to be sure they are all being paid. If you have problems with your format or other technical problems, be sure to let Stratford know. If it is something that we can correct, we need to be notified as soon as possible. We are extremely busy now and it may take some time to work through problems.

If you have a broadband connection and would like to try the new windows version, send an email to: trial@stratfordsoftware.com. We can send you an id and password that will allow you to download the software from our web site at no charge. The size of the download file is about 60 megabytes so we don't recommend it for slow (modem) Internet connections. You can get the new program on CD for a small media charge, usually about $2 (plus tax in Ca).

If you have not received an update since July 1, then you are not HIPAA compliant. We released v4010-A1 (addendum) on June 25. Please contact support if you need an update. We expect several more updates will be necessary to be HIPAA compliant in the near future. If you bill Medicare, the present update is necessary to avoid claim rejection.

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

inside this issue . . . .

Stratford has nearly **5,100** 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. CD updates are sent when you need it. Internet downloads are available at least monthly. •

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. •

Stratford is now approved for v4010-A1 by Riverbend Medicare, Blue Shield of California, New England NHIC Medicare, California NHIC Medicare, Blue Cross CA, Noridian (Medicare contractor for several states), Sutter Connect – Sacramento CA, Regence. We are beginning to convert Ca Blue Cross people now. If you want to be converted, let us know.

We are presently testing for v4010-A1 Mass Health & Value Options, Blue Cross, and New York Medicare, (Empire Medicare), Medi-Cal / Central Coast Alliance—CA / Santa Cruz CA, 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. •

MORE SUPPORT NOTES

Fees for supplies, handling and shipping. Due to an ongoing sales tax audit by the State of California—probably related to the horrible financial condition of the state, we must begin itemizing the various charges involved in shipments. The auditor has determined that handling charges are taxable. Your total cost may not change significantly, but you will notice a difference in the way your invoice looks. California shipments will be taxed on handling fees beginning July 1, 2000. •

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 $35 (+ 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

Q: What does Stratford recommend for a backup method?

A: We recommend using a CD. You can backup daily for less that $1.00, and if you buy in quantities of 100 it may only be 39-59 cents per day. That is really cheap insurance. If you are careful with a CD, it can last up to 100 years. Be sure to take it home or somewhere away from your computer. We really like a CD, because almost any computer can read it. If you use tape and you ever need to restore, it may be very difficult to find the same model and backup software on a different computer. We no longer have any tape units at Stratford because of the compatibility problems.

Q: I just got DSL service in my office and I can now download large files very fast. Can I download updates to my Stratford program? It seems to me that this would be the ideal way to receive updates instead of waiting on the mail. Also, I could get an update at my convenience, any day, any time.

A: You are absolutely correct. Internet download is the perfect way to get your updates. If you subscribe to software support, send an email to:
update@stratfordsoftware.com
and we will send you an ID & password. The ID and password will change periodically. We plan to automate this service in the future if there is sufficient demand. Let us know what you think. The update is very large: about 60 megabytes and so is not suitable for modem connections.

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 "Probably not" because Stratford cannot access its client's patient information. In December 2002 there is 'OCR Guidance' that, we believe, is on this specific point: "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." •
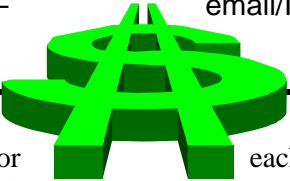
SOFTWARE SUPPORT NOTES

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
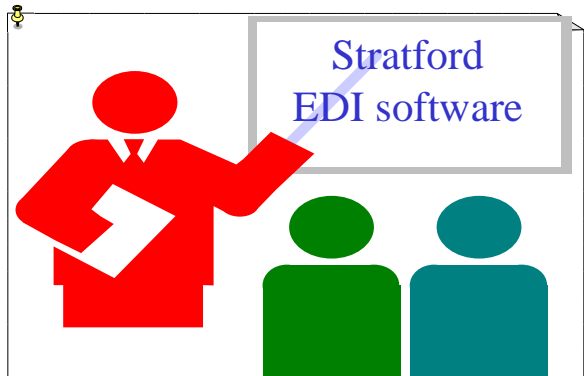
INTERNET RESOURCES

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.