HandyWork Newsletter

Summer 1998

Y2K Updates and a HandyWorks Agreement

Our New Partner!

We are happy to announce that we are now working with the programmers at ClaKen Software, producers of DC-PowerNotes. As part of our agreement, they will integrate HandyWorks for Windows into their system so that users of PowerNotes will be able to use HandyWorks for accounting and billing.

While this has no direct or immediate impact on our existing user base, once the PowerBilling conversion is done, all of HWW users will be given an opportunity to jump into the PowerNotes at a very reasonable cost. This will give those of you interested in a more powerful notes system and opportunity to get it without abandoning the HWW platform you have all come to know and love!

We at HandyWorks will continue to serve as the programming foundation for the new software. And we will continue to support our existing user base (DOS and HWW). No one will be forced or asked to switch over.

What's New

Our DOS version has undergone a minor upgrade to Version 6.32. This upgrade includes a ledger card repair utility, the Y2K HCFA form update for Medicare, and the Y2K update to the appointment book. If you have done this upgrade, your Medicare claims will print with 4 digit years. Be sure to check that your Place of Service is still 11.

Similar to the evolution of the DOS program over its first decade, the Windows program continues to evolve. Here are a some recent improvements.

The Narrative/Soap Writer now lets you direct your report to the Referral Source or Attorney, and will print the full address if requested.

The MaxPayPerVisit feature (in Case Data, under Accounting) limits the "insurance owes" for that visit, making the "patient owes" portion correspondingly greater. Also working are MaxPay/VisitsPerYear and the MaxPayPerLife options.

Account numbers and the Case Description has now been added to Statements along with page numbering.

Electronic claims now supports all clearing houses that accept the NSF 2.0 claims transmission standard. One alternative to NDC that some of users have found useful is MedeAmerica. Contact Jack Kingston at 770-521-8857.

Vacation

The HandyWorks office will be closed from **8/22/98 - 8/29/98**. Since it is no vacation if we are checking for messages on a daily basis, there will be NO SUPPORT this week. Make sure you are backed up, and save your problems for when we return.

EMAIL Upgrades

While we have relied in the past on the post-office to deliver fixes and patches to many users, over 40% of you now let us do this by e-mail. Not only is this easier for all of us, but you can get your fix in minutes, rather than the week or so it took the manual way. Send your email address to us at email@HandyWorks.com.

DOS to HWW Upgrade Offer

DOS users (now less than 1/2 of hw users) can upgrade to the Windows version for only $500. All of your DOS data can be transferred over while leaving the DOS system intact and still perfectly usable. This low price offer is only available to DOS users who are current in their maintenance.

We recommend upgrading for many reasons. On our side, maintaining the Windows version is easier. HCFA changes, which is the most common issue, is a snap in Windows. Oftentimes, we can help you make the change to the form, right in your office, in a matter of moments.

Other benefits include the fact that the Windows program is simply a better program. You lose none of the DOS features, yet gain a myriad of other benefits. One thing that most of us need right now is fixed dollar co-pays. Another great feature is the

ability to make payments go to specific office visits. This helps track those "pesky" insurance errors in which they pay only part your bill. (We wonder if they skip visit dates on purpose, or they are simply incompetent).

For those of you who chose to remain with the DOS version, this is OK! We will continue to support the DOS system, and the DOS version is fully functional under any Windows environment. We understand that some offices are resistant to change from a system they are comfortable with to one that is "unknown".

A Warning to DOS Users

We have heard reports from some of our DOS users that they are having printer problems when they upgrade their printer. This is caused by 2 factors. First, most newer printer are Postscript printers, meaning that they do not accept the plain ASCII character stream sent out by HandyWorks-Dos. Secondly, in Windows 95 systems, during printer installation, you must check the box marked "print from DOS".

Overall, the best thing a DOS user can do is stay with existing equipment, or considering upgrading to the HW Windows version. Some of you who looked at 1996 or 1997 early releases of HW-Windows (and found it slow or clunky) are asked to give it another look.

Backup Horror!

As usual, we have a sad story to tell. The office in question was using a tape backup system. It started acting weirdly. Well OK, they were planning to get a new machine, so for the last three weeks they were content to let things lie unbacked up. Then the Dr. told his office manager to do a selective backup. What happened next, (and we do not know why!) was that the entire contents of their hw directory disappeared. And what makes this the horror story is that when they went to older backup tapes, they discovered that they had not been backing up HandyWorks at all. Fortunately, we had helped them recover data in October, 1997, so they only had about 7 months of data to re-enter.

To the wise: Change from floppy or tape backups and install a Zip drive. These can be internal or can attach to the parallel port between the computer and printer. The advantage is that Zip disks can hold 100 megabytes and that they require no special software (other than the drivers supplied by Iomega, the manufacturer). The backups made on Zip disks suffer no compatability issues in going from machine to machine, and the backup process is much faster than disks or tapes.

Lastly, back up at least 3 times a week, each time on a different disk. We label ours Monday, Wednesday and Friday. While we haven't needed our backups for the last 9 months, I sleep much better knowing my 15 years of data is safe!

To backup DOS - backup the *.dat and *. (*.blank) files in the hw directory. To backup HWW - backup the HWDATA.MDB file in the hww directory.

The Billing Wizard

Most offices are so busy that few have time to learn to use Handyworks for Windows to its fullest potential. This has been made very clear to us as we talk to users about billing. Here are some important guidelines to help you get the most out of the Billing Wizard.

First off, that it is of value to produce the Pre-billing Report before you run your bills. Not only will the Pre-billing Report enable you to catch obvious errors before committing the bills to HCFA paper, but it will speed up the entire billing process. In the latest upgrade you'll notice a new Pre-billing option called "Exhaustive Search". If you suspect that HWW is not picking up all unbilled visits, click on this option before producing your report. It's a pair of suspenders to wear with your belt for full assurance that you are getting everything you need.

The other important element of the billing wizard is that once you create new bills, they are created regardless of whether they get printed out. That means you can't go back and just create the bills again, you have to use one of the reprint options.

As in DOS, the "Unpaid Bills" report is very useful. And one of the best features of the new wizard is the ability to limit reports to specific carriers, carrier types, bill dates, etc. Use this option to print specific reports for your HMO's, etc.

With regards to bill reprinting, there is a new option to reprint only Unpaid Bills. As with all the reporting options, you can limit your choice by insurance type, carrier, etc.

Once you are more comfortable with this wizard, you can perform tasks as specific as reprinting all unpaid automobile claims for the first quarter of 1998. Or all Oxford clients with unpaid visits in April. When it comes to organizing your billing workload, this wizard is a powerful tool.

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