

Softwords

A&L Computer Software Limited

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A&L's Head Office: (905) 886-8066
 Oak/Miss/Bramp/Ajax: (416) 520-3238
 Ottawa Office: (613) 737-0677
 Sudbury Office: (705) 522-7577
 Timmins Office: (705) 268-4922
 Windsor Office: (519) 977-6050
 California Office: (760)-723-8121
 Malaysia Office: 011-603-777-1905
 Web Link Address: www.anl.com

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◆ *The Future Is Now...*

A&L and IBM - Joint Project

In the August issue of *Softwords* we told you about a government initiative designed to provide some measure of tax relief for Canadian businesses to help them become Year 2000 compliant.

This is taking the form of an accelerated CCA deduction to be provided to small- and medium-sized enterprises on the cost of computer hardware and software acquired between January 1, 1998 and June 30, 1999 in order to replace facilities that are not Year 2000 compliant. The maximum allowable deduction is \$50,000 per tax payer/partnership.

For eligible computer hardware and software, accelerated CCA deductions, combined with the regular CCA claims, will result in 100 percent of the cost eligible expenditures being deductible in the year of acquisition.

Eligibility for this deduction also extends to computer chips and firmware (i.e. software that is embedded in a computer chip) that are necessary to ensure functionality in the year 2000. This means that if your current computer can be made Year 2000 compliant by merely changing a chip, the expense involved for that is also a valid deduction.

Nevertheless, you will most likely wish to take advantage of this opportunity to upgrade your hardware and software. This year has been characterized by continual change, not only in information technology but also in Ontario's medical community.

Changes to the Ministry of Health's fee submission format have resulted in several billing software upgrades. More and more physicians are switching to modem transmission of claims. Windows 98 has come on to the scene. And Year 2000 compliance is on everybody's mind.

With the eventual introduction of Primary Care Reform and the Ontario Smart System For Health, the way physicians operate their business is

undergoing a fairly substantial evolution.

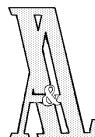
Special Hardware Pricing

A&L Computer Software Limited has formulated a strategy with IBM to enable any physician's office or clinic to deal effectively with these changes. Through a special arrangement with IBM we are able to offer **special hardware prices to Ontario physicians** anytime up to the end of June 30, 1999. **Please refer to page 4 for additional details.**

This will enable you to upgrade your medical office or clinic's computing facilities at a reduced hardware cost to become Year 2000 compliant, and also give you the speed and power to handle all the latest software upgrades and the newly released Windows 98 operating system. And you may take advantage of the government's accelerated CCA deduction.

Furthermore, if you are currently using our DOS based A&L Medical System and decide to upgrade your hardware, you may also wish to choose this opportunity to switch to our Windows based package where your OHIP claims transmission costs are included within the software's monthly subscription fee.

Taking advantage of this window of opportunity will enable you to upgrade your hardware, ensure you are Year 2000 compliant and give you the latest state of the art medical software to position you for efficiently running your medical office practice in the years to come.



Now Is The Time!

The User's Corner

Document Imaging

Fee Code Updates

Are You Buried In Paper?

Service Fees...and how to change them!

Over the last few months, you may have received bulletins or disks from the Ministry Of Health advising you of changes to the Schedule of Benefits fee codes. You will notice on the bulletins that they are generally sent to a given specialty or group. For reasons only the Ministry Of Health knows, that does not include A&L or any other software vendor. But you can certainly update fees yourself by following these easy steps:

For A&L Medical Software (DOS) users:

Choose option #2 from your main menu (File Maintenance).

Then choose option #3 (OHIP Service Code File).

Enter the service code in the format:

alpha - numeric - numeric - numeric.

If the claim is an existing service code, the current information will appear.

To change the price of the service, just press 3 then enter, put in the new amount and press enter.

Press enter once more.

You have now updated your service code. If it is a new claim, you will have to continue with the following steps:

Enter the description. Then enter the amount. You need the first three fields (minimum) entered into the system for entering any service code.

If there are any other factors involved in this service code such as age, base units, hospital billing and premiums, please refer to the Users Manual, or call A&L for instruction.

For A&L HERO* Windows users:

Click on Setup Utilities icon. Down the left-hand side, click on the Fee icon.


If you are changing the amount of an existing service code, double-click on the Code field (top left-hand corner), bring up your service code, change the amount and save the entry.

If you are entering a brand new fee, enter the service code in the format:

alpha - numeric - numeric - numeric

Enter a description then enter an amount.

If there is anything else required, click a check mark under the required field (e.g. diagnostic code, admit date, etc.), then save.

*HERO  a registered trademark of HTN Inc.

Can you see the surface of your desk? Or is it buried in patient charts, examination notes, laboratory results and the like? Is your computer system being used to its fullest capacity to help run your office in the most efficient manner? Are your filing cabinets bulging with patient files, some of which have been inactive for years? Can your receptionist easily provide you with the details of a patient's last visit prior to that patient walking into your examination room?

The answers to these questions might explain why you never seem to get caught up with all your paperwork. Or why you can't find the right piece of paper or report when you need it.

Computers are supposed to solve your information storage requirements, but somehow they seem to have created even more paper documents, reports and forms than you ever had before. More to file, and still more to search through when you are in a hurry to find that particular patient's test results to forward to a consulting physician.

Your patients are growing in number and you need all the information you can collect in order to treat them to the best of your ability. Is there an efficient way for you to store it all, and yet still maintain rapid access when you need it, either for reference, or to send to another involved medical care provider? Can you use your computer to store information that you normally keep in filing cabinets?

Happily, the short answer to these questions is 'yes'. There are software packages available that enable you to convert hard copy documents into electronic data that can be saved on your hard drive, or on a CD-ROM, or on any other medium that will allow high volumes of electronic data to be stored and accessed.

To determine your requirements you will need to do a detailed analysis of what you currently have in your filing cabinets, what will be filed there in the coming months, who will need to access it and how frequently, and what you will be doing with all of this information.

Only then will you be in a position to determine if and how a computerized Document Imaging System can help your office, and what features it should have. For instance, do you need it to archive all the information you currently store on inactive patients? Or will you be electronically storing files for only new patients? Who will need to access this information, and how often? Will you need to access your information remotely? Will you frequently need to provide copies of some of your stored records to other consulting physicians, hospitals or insurance companies? What levels of security will you need to protect confidential patient information?

Once you have answers to these types of question you can check with your medical software vendor for a practical solution.

