



**AVANTA**<sup>®</sup>  
MEDICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS

**FAX**  
NOVEMBER 26, 2003

# MEDICARE ELECTRONIC CLAIMS UPDATE—PROBLEM SOLVED!

On Wednesday, 11/19/03, NHIC began applying a new edit to incoming electronic claims submission files. This edit (5019) causes their system to reject any file containing a certain class of characters, called "control characters," with the following message returned in the ACK file: **A Non-preferred Character (CONTROL) was found in the file. ALL SUBMITTED DATA WITHIN THE FILE HAVE BEEN REJECTED BECAUSE OF THIS ERROR.**

These control characters are standard for the XModem protocol and have never caused a problem until NHIC introduced this new edit. Avanta's technical staff immediately located the problem, informed NHIC of the problem they introduced, proposed a simple solution that would have to be implemented on NHIC's end of the transmission, and awaited a response.

On Monday afternoon, NHIC informed us that they would not make any changes on their end and would no longer accept files submitted using the XModem protocol. While we are disappointed and puzzled by their abrupt decision to change their system with no prior warning, our top priority was, as always, to develop a work-around to allow you to submit your electronic claims with as little disruption as possible. Consequently, we immediately started working on a switch to the ZModem protocol for file Medicare electronic claim submission.

We are happy to announce that our programming staff has just completed the necessary changes and we will distribute them to your system via modem later today. All of the rejected claims will need to be reflagged, which can be easily done using the new Reflag Previously Billed Items program, rebuilt in a new transmissions and retransmitted. An Avanta Support Specialist will call your office today when the new program has been installed on your system, and answer any questions you may have.

Have a safe and fun Thanksgiving Holiday!

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