Worried About Compliance with HIPAA Regulations?

One of the major issues that will be confronting every medical practice that utilizes electronic distribution of patient information is the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

The purpose of this series of regulations is to protect the confidentiality of patient information that travels in the public network and to standardize coding for electronically transmitted patient insurance claims, enrollment, and billing information.

The first of the final rules for implementation of HIPAA was released in August. It is expected that the majority of the rules will be finalized by the end of this year. Organizations will have 26 months from the release of a final rule to comply.

It is critical that you evaluate all aspects of patient data access in your organization. The laboratory is only one component of the administration, security, and privacy of patient data that is touched by the HIPAA regulation.

We will continue to provide resources to help you prepare for HIPAA compliance through our web site (www.orchardsoft.com) and this newsletter. See the "Helpful HIPAA Web Sites" article on page 2 for the web addresses you can visit for more information. ❖

Excellent Response to Harvest™ LIS Release!

In the last issue of *news@orchard* we announced the release of Harvest™ LIS version 3.0, which included many exciting new features.

We are pleased to report that at the time this newsletter is going to press, approximately 20% of our clients are up and running with the new version! We have also received Upgrade Response Forms from another 25% of our clients, and we are currently scheduling installations for those clients.

Please email (support@orchardsoft.com), phone (800-856-1948), or fax (317-573-2633) in your Upgrade Response Form so that we can get you on the latest version as soon as possible. ❖

Special Holiday Technical Support Hours

Our offices will be closed November 23rd & 24th for Thanksgiving, December 25th & 26th for Christmas, and January 1st for New Year's. On December 25th the on-call Systems Engineer will check with our answering service periodically for emergency calls.

Please limit your calls on that day to true emergencies so that the individuals who have volunteered their time may also celebrate this holiday with their family and friends. We will continue to have 24-hour support for the Thanksgiving and New Year's holidays.

Happy Holidays from the entire Orchard Software Family! ❖

Help Us Harvest Your Needs!

As many of you have seen over the past several years, Orchard Software has made a concerted effort to make sure that the feature and utility set within your Harvest™ LIS – formerly known as Costello™ – has stayed current with the changing needs of your laboratory. Each of you plays a major role in reaching that goal, and in turn, benefits from the enhancement suggestions of others.

Significant examples of user-requested enhancements to Harvest™ LIS include: the ICD-9 filter; sample routing based on insurance plan; rules-based logic for reflex testing; support for encounters; deferred and reoccurring orders; on-line help files; cc: reports to other providers; and more granular assignment of security privileges.

Help us continue this pattern of providing enhanced features in response to changes in the way that you manage the workflow of your laboratories. We use the 'Request for Modification' form for soliciting your input on feature enhancements.

Through your feedback on these requests, we will continue to keep pace with your rapidly changing needs.

If you do not already have copies of the form, contact our Technical Support help desk (800-856-1948) and they will be glad to send you the form.

Check out the "Feedback Forum: Requests for Modifications" article on page 4 for two issues facing some of our customers that we are currently investigating. ❖

The cc: Providers screen is one of many features added based on Requests for Modification submitted from users like you! See the online help for information on using this feature.

Employee Spotlight on John Fischer

We chose to profile John Fischer in our first Employee Spotlight because he has the distinction of being our most senior Systems Engineer. John has been Orchard Software's point man on installations at public health departments and at a number of Orchard Software's larger installations.

John joined Orchard Software in 1995 after working for several years at a commercial reference laboratory. There he gained extensive experience in clinical microbiology and held a number of management positions dealing with all aspects of the laboratory's business.

John currently resides in the Phoenix area. The reason we say currently is because John has a habit of moving every couple of years. Since starting at Orchard, John and his wife Cheryl have lived in Indiana, Kentucky, and Arizona. What is puzzling is that John and Cheryl both enjoy boating and now they live in a desert! John always has an interesting story or two about some of the situations he has encountered performing installations. If you see John, ask him about refrigerators and stringing cable across a ceiling. ❖

Helpful HIPAA-Related Web Sites

As we promised in the opening article, we will be continuing to provide information to help you prepare for HIPAA compliance.

We found a number of web sites that provide both an overview of the regulation and direction on how to begin the process of evaluating your organization's degree of compliance with these regulations.

Look for more information in future newsletters on what steps Orchard is taking to make complying with HIPAA standards easier. Also, we will soon be adding a section on our web site (www.orchardsoft.com) to cover this important issue. ❖

American Health Information Management Association
www.ahima.org/hipaa.html

DHHS HIPAA administrative simplification
www.aspe.os.dhhs.gov/admnsimp

Electronic Healthcare Network Accreditation Commission
(Info on security accreditation and security best practices)
www.ehnac.org/security.html

HIPAA Homepage
www.hcfa.gov/hipaa/hipaahm.htm

Computer Based Records Institute
(Tools for developing confidentiality policies)
www.cpri.org

Replacing an Analyzer? Let Orchard Help

When the time comes to replace an analyzer, you are probably concerned about whether the new equipment will work with your Orchard™ LIS system. Orchard can help you ensure a smooth transition.

1. Evaluating Options
    When you consider buying a new analyzer, it is important to notify Orchard Software as soon as possible. We can give you information about how the interface will work with your Orchard™ LIS System, and also let you know if we currently have an interface available for the instrument you are considering.
2. Negotiating Payment
    In most cases, there is a cost for interfacing a new piece of equipment. This cost can vary depending on the type of analyzer selected and whether a site visit is required. Contact your Orchard Sales Representative prior to final negotiations with the instrument vendor. In many cases the vendor of the new analyzer will cover the cost of interfacing a new analyzer, including the site visit.
3. Scheduling Interface Installation
    Once you have purchased the analyzer and have scheduled a delivery date, it is important that you contact Orchard Software to schedule the installation of your new interface. Please provide us as much advance notice as possible so that we can try to time your interface installation appropriately.

    If your analyzer does not require a site visit, it is important to contact Orchard Technical Support with the following information:
    *   Name of Analyzer
    *   Will this analyzer replace a current analyzer or is it an addition?
    *   What is the distance between the new analyzer and the Workstation to which it will be connected?

    We must receive a purchase order before we can confirm the scheduled installation date for any new interface. You may forward purchase orders to your Orchard Sales Representative or you may fax them to (317) 573-2633, marked Attention: Pete Ritz.

Please remember that your System Administrator will need to complete some database refinement prior to bringing your new analyzer on-line. We will send the required information to update the data file at the time you schedule the installation of your new analyzer interface. For further information on coordinating the installation of a new analyzer interface, or to answer any questions on this subject, contact Rich Brayfield, Project Manager at (800) 856-1948.❖
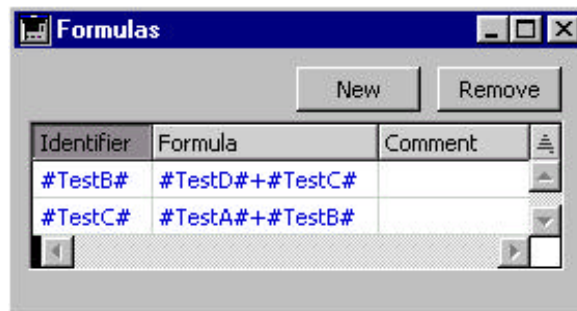
Fixing a Recursive Formula

The formulas shown here are recursive formulas. If you had these entries in the Formulas table, then you would receive the error mentioned in the "Tech Tips" article.

To correct the error, you must change or delete one or both of the formulas so that they do not reference each other.

Remember to save the change before exiting the Formulas table. See the online help for more information on creating and using formulas.

If you ever need assistance, please call the Technical Support help desk (800-856-1948). We will be happy to help you!❖

Identifier	Formula	Comment
#TestB#	#TestD#+#TestC#	
#TestC#	#TestA#+#TestB#	

Tech Tips

Using formulas can save time, but they can occasionally cause headaches. Sometimes formulas stop working due to a change. Perhaps a new analyzer or a new test method has caused a change in the tests or order choices used in a formula. You can usually resolve formula problems by reviewing the calculations and verifying that the test identifiers are set up properly.

If a formula suddenly stops working, make sure that the active formula is linked to an active test, and that this test is included in the correct order choice.

If you get the following error: "Not enough stack space in memory to complete current method," then there is a 'recursive' formula present in the Formulas Table.

A recursive formula occurs when the result of one calculation causes the recalculation of another formula, which in turn causes a recalculation of the original formula. See the "Fixing a Recursive Formula" article for an example.

When the system tries to perform the calculation, it gets locked in a loop until the memory stack is exhausted.

To clear the lockup, press <CTRL> + <ALT> + <DEL> to bring up the Task Manager, select End Task, select Harvest™ (or Costello™) on the Application tab, and then click on End Task to quit the program. Re-launch Harvest™ (or Costello™), and check all formulas.❖

Backups

Remember to perform your regular backups! They are your protection against down time and data loss.❖

Feedback Forum: Requests for Modifications

From time to time we will be soliciting your feedback regarding potential modifications to Harvest™ LIS. Currently, we are looking into many possible new or expanded features for future versions of our software, including those listed below.

To help us know what you would find useful, please review these topics and send us any thoughts or suggestions you may have.

- Financial Class and Financial Class Guarantor: How are these two concepts applied within your enterprise? How does your laboratory exchange information about financial class and FC guarantor with your billing department or billing application?

- Procedure Code Modifiers: Does your Medicare payor demand procedure code modifiers? Which codes and under what conditions? Do any other of your payors use procedure code modifiers besides Medicare? If so, is their coding system for a condition (for example – possession of a signed Advance Beneficiary Notice) the same as for your local Medicare payor? If you use procedure code modifiers, are they applied at the requisition or order choice level?

Submit your comments on these items and any other Requests for Modification to us by mail, email (support@orchardsoft.com), or fax (317-573-2633). Once received, these requests are forwarded to Thom Franklin, Quality Assurance Project Manager, for review. ❖

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Mailing Address Line 1
Mailing Address Line 2
Mailing Address Line 3
Mailing Address Line 4
Mailing Address Line 5
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Visit our website at
www.orchardsoft.com