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The SSI Group Sets CORE Testing Benchmark

Mobile, Alabama, December 18, 2006 – In October 2006, The SSI Group, Inc. (SSI) committed to adopt CAQH CORE eligibility benefit rules and immediately began working to achieve certification of Phase 1 of the project. In the first phase of this project, SSI pledged to electronically exchange information according to the CORE operating rules by March 31, 2007.

In only two months, SSI was certified as the first vendor to meet the Phase 1 rules. Specifically, the company has been certified as both an IT vendor and a healthcare clearinghouse. These operating rules enable healthcare providers to submit a benefit/eligibility verification request and receive a response within 20 seconds. Specifically, SSI's clients can use one of two of the company's eligibility verification products – ClickON® E-Verify or the application service provider (ASP) version ClickON® Net Eligibility – to submit eligibility requests and receive eligibility responses.

After completing preliminary work, SSI began testing its readiness to meet CORE's Phase 1 requirements. This involved a collaborative effort between SSI, CAQH staff and Edifecs, which provides B2B interoperability testing and the CORE testing platform.

"We have been working on HIPAA initiatives for many years already and understood the complexities in dealing with the regulated transactions for eligibility verification," said SSI's Assistant Vice President of Research and Development Bobby Zimmerman. "CORE testing fit us like a glove because of that experience."

Testing for SSI was unique in that the company tested as both an eligibility source and requestor. As a source, SSI houses eligibility data and also provides a clearinghouse to interface with insurance payers to transmit healthcare insurance eligibility and benefit data to providers. SSI's eligibility verification software is the company's application that requests the information and then displays the response from the insurance payer in a standardized format either in a real-time environment or via a batch file where many requests are made at one time.

As the authorized vendor to provide certification testing for the CAQH eligibility and benefit verification initiative, Edifecs was responsible for testing whether or not SSI's applications were in compliance with the CORE Phase I rules. This testing service was conducted via the Edifecs Collabrus Website.

"Working with the CAQH and Edifecs staffs and utilizing the Edifecs platform was a seamless process, helping us to identify potential issues and progressing past those to a successful certification," Zimmerman added. "We had to pass a series of 56 tests certifying our ability to act

as both an information source and information receive in in accordance with CORE requirements. Edifecs test suites were integrated with SSI's Eligibility Clearinghouse to test its conformance in both batch and real-time modes."

CORE takes advantage of the HIPAA 270/271 Transaction Code Sets for eligibility inquiry and response, of which many providers are already familiar. Now that SSI is Phase 1 CORE certified, its customers can expect to receive their insurance eligibility and benefit information in 20 seconds or less for any patient and participating health plan in the familiar format.

About CORE and CAQH
CAQH is a catalyst for healthcare industry collaboration on initiatives that simplify and streamline healthcare administration. CAQH solutions help promote quality interactions between plans, providers and other stakeholders, reduce costs and frustrations associated with healthcare administration, facilitate administrative healthcare information exchange and encourage administrative and clinical data integration.

CAQH launched CORE to promote health plan-provider interoperability and improve provider access to administrative information. To date, the voluntary industry-wide initiative has brought together nearly 100 industry stakeholders (www.caqh.org/ben_participating.php), including health plans, providers, vendors, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and other government agencies, associations, regional entities, standard-setting organizations and others, that cover more than 130 million lives, or more than 75 percent of the commercially insured plus Medicare and state-based Medicaid beneficiaries. In collaboration, they have built consensus on a set of operating rules to:
- Enhance interoperability between providers and payers
- Streamline eligibility and benefit data transactions
- Reduce the amount of time and resources providers spend on administrative functions – time better spent with patients

CORE Operating rules build on existing standards, such as HIPAA, to make electronic transactions more predictable and consistent, regardless of the technology.
Visit www.caqh.org for more information.

About Edifecs
Edifecs helps organizations achieve interoperability and return on investment by simplifying the adoption of standard electronic transactions and deriving business value from trading partner communities. The Edifecs Healthcare SuiteTM includes business performance management applications that automate and manage the full lifecycle of transactions; defining requirements, community enablement, testing and data validation, real-time transaction monitoring, repair and reconciliation, and providing transaction analytics.

2006 marks 10 years of Edifecs' expertise in providing innovative technology solutions to over 1600 customers worldwide. Edifecs has over 300 customers and partners in healthcare that include 16 Blue Plans, 35 Medicaid, State and Federal Agencies, along with partnership arrangements with most leading middleware stack vendors. Edifecs is the sponsor of CollabrusTM, one of healthcare's largest third party testing and certification services with over 10,000 members. Founded in 1996, Edifecs is headquartered in Bellevue, WA. Company Website: www.edifecs.com. Contact: Kevin Pierce 425-452-0622, kevinp@edifecs.com.

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About The SSI Group, Inc.

The SSI Group, Inc. is a national, diversified information technology company established in 1988. It maintains corporate headquarters in Mobile, Ala., and branch facilities in Clearwater, Fla.; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colo.; and Chesapeake, Va. With approximately 385 employees and 2,200-plus clients nationwide, SSI leads the healthcare field in healthcare claims management technology, EDI platforms and networking. ClickON technology has more than 200,000 built-in edits, delivers HIPAA-certified transactions from Claredi, is EHNAC certified and has 800 payer connections. As a testament to the company's leadership, the company's technology processes 250 million transactions annually, totaling in excess of $300 billion.

The company offers a wide range of provider/payer/physician services and technologies for managing the revenue cycle - claims processing (ASP/Direct/Clearinghouse), document management and business office outsourcing for paper claims. http://www.thessigroup.com.

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