

You Can Update to eTHOMAS Version 9 Now!

Version 9 is here! The update is now available to you, free of charge, as an active eTHOMAS client. If you are ready to update, you simply need to run your THOMAS AutoUpdate program. No muss, no fuss, no discs, etc. It is as simple as auto-updating.

This is our most streamlined update and version of eTHOMAS to date. We have enhanced the software and what it can do, with you in mind. Our goal, as always, is to help make managing your practice even easier.

The next time you do go to update your eTHOMAS, you will be asked to update to version 9, and accept a new licensing agreement, for the new program. You do not have to make a mad dash to update right away, but you can if you would like.

You won't be disappointed, update to version 9 now!



Genius on the Web is "Help", on Steroids!

Normally, steroids are a dangerous and bad thing, but in eTHOMAS v9 we are giving you some "help" that is so pumped up, you might want to test it for steroids. I used to be a big Saturday Night Live kind of gal, and I always got a big kick out of Hans and Franz, they were always there to "pump you up". Well, I want you to know that I have my two friends, Lil' e Genius and big Tommy Solutions, and they are here to pump up your "help" and make eTHOMAS even easier to use. You no longer have to look at little, girly info cloud buttons:

- Search for what you want and get it delivered with options
- Get answers you can use immediately, with extras
- Click on a video, and SEE how to work through or do something in THOMAS
- Instant access to helpful news articles like our Management or Compliance Corner series
- Instant access to Mark's Hot News as it streams into your THOMAS
- Links to your state's resources
- All within your THOMAS, in Genius on the Web

The boys want to talk to you, so here is your official challenge from the boys, in their best, fake-y Arnold Schwarzenegger-like accents:

"We're Tommy Solutions and Lil' e Genius and we're here to pump you up."

The flexing begins, both posing to show off their best THOMAS form, while stating in unison, "We want you to build up your eTHOMAS muscles."

Tommy begins wiggling around to work into a pose. "Yeah, we don't want you to be girly THOMAS users anymore."

Both in stereo, "No!" synced to perfection.

Lil' e Genius flexes broadly, posing in one of those Ares shooting an invisible bow poses, before continuing, as if to illustrate his point. "We want to help you pump up your THOMAS skills and give you big, manly, man THOMAS muscles. There is no more room for flab in your office."

Not to be outdone, Tommy turns around, flexes his back, legs, and arms, flinging some baby oil in your general direction, taunting you, while replying, "Yeah, big, huge, manly THOMAS muscles, the better to pump up your office and bank accounts."

What more can I, humble editor, add to that? Thanks, guys. So the message is, don't be a girly THOMAS users, pump up with Genius on the Web, and make Tommy and Lil'e proud the next time you flex your big, manly THOMAS muscles back at them.

You can get to Genius on the Web, by clicking on the "Messaging" tab on the top, then click on "Genius on the Web" to the left. THOMAS will open up your web browser for you (you may need to click on the window to open it fully on your screen). Now you can click around and use it just like a web site. Please note, that you can only access Genius on the Web through the eTHOMAS program itself. You will not be able to bookmark it or leave an outside link on your desktop. You will need Internet access to use this feature.



UPDATE TO eTHOMAS v9!

If you haven't updated to eTHOMAS version 9 yet, I strongly recommend that you do so A.S.A.P. so that you take advantage of new features like Genius on the Web and Genius Mail. There is no charge for current eTHOMAS users. Simply update, accept the end user agreement, open eTHOMAS and check out the "What's New" area, under the "Messaging" tab to get started!

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About Genius Solutions

We provide the best office automation solutions for healthcare office and business success.

Based in Michigan, Genius Solutions Inc. has serviced clients throughout the United States for more than two decades, and has a proven track record in developing cutting edge medical practice management software and applications. We are the creators of the Total Health Office Management Automation System (THOMAS) practice management software.

Comprehensive doesn't have to mean complicated.

Genius Solutions Holiday Schedule

Memorial Day-May 25 (Monday)
 Independence Day-July 6 (Monday)



Follow-up: ICD-10 Implementation

In a very expected move, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have released a final ruling pushing the implementation date for ICD-10 forward, from an October 1, 2011 deadline to an October 1, 2013 deadline. Most experts and healthcare people believe that this date is still unrealistic for the implementation of ICD-10 and feel that the current final rule may not be the last final rule modification. We will continue to keep you posted as things develop.

As always, for more details, or to answer any additional questions, please visit the CMS Web site at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/TransactionCodeSetsStands/>



Upcoming Conferences & Trade Shows

Stop by and visit us at one of the upcoming shows, so that we can get to know you better. Oh, and don't forget to bring a friend.

Michigan Society of Medical Assistants (MSMA)

Troy Hilton, Troy, MI
 5/2/09 (4/30 - 5/3)
<http://www.altrue.net/site/msma03/>

Michigan Osteopathic Association (MOA)

Hyatt Regency, Dearborn, MI
 Booth 101
 5/13/09 - 5/15/09
<http://www.mi-osteopathic.org/members/eventsUpcoming.php>

I am offering no tricks this newsletter, just a tip that will keep on giving: Genius Mail. eTHOMAS v9 offers you a fantastic new way to talk to us and get support help as you go. We are now offering Genius Mail as an additional way that you can contact us for questions or help.

Genius Mail Benefits:

- Easy-to-use communications tool.
- Quick response time.
- For those questions on-the-go.
- Communication from the comfort of eTHOMAS!
- Send and receive communications from Genius Solutions' technical support team.
- Simply type your message and click "send"--it's that easy!

If only household chores were as easy to get done!

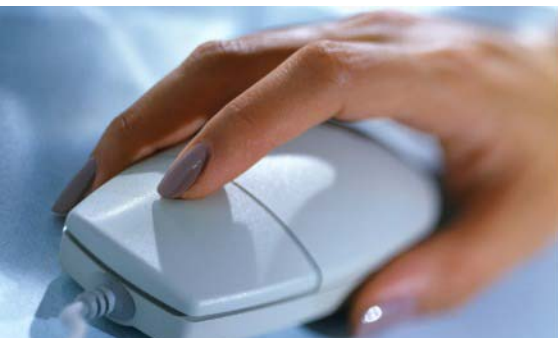
Genius Mail is not instant messaging, and it is not quite e-mail (although that would be its closest relation), but it is a secure communication between you and your eTHOMAS and support. When you send Genius Mail, it sends directly from your THOMAS to us. No middle-man, no waiting in a call queue, no call back. Your mail comes safely into our Genius support staff, where they will review your Genius Mail questions and send you a Genius Mail response that will go directly back into your THOMAS Genius Mail. There for help now, and in the future. If your computer blew up or your THOMAS program went on holiday to Bermuda without you, then you would not want to send a Genius Mail for immediate help. However, if you have quick questions or concerns, and you would like us to get back with you shortly and not have to wait on the phone, then Genius Mail is perfect for your question. You can simply send us a Genius Mail message, go about your work and a response will be sent back to you shortly. Help, as you need it, without the interruptions you don't need. Please remember that you will need Internet access to use feature.

How to:

- 1 Click on the "**Messaging**" tab at the top right of your THOMAS.
- 2 Click on "**Genius Mail**" to the left.
- 3 Once Genius Mail is open, choose "**New Msg**" (new message).
- 4 "**From**" is automatically filled in for you, from how you are currently logged into THOMAS.
- 5 As Genius Mail only comes to Genius, we also took the liberty of pre-loading us into the "**To**" area.
- 6 Please log in a "**Subject**" and then below it in the open box, log in your question, concern, or conundrum.
- 7 When you are done, click the "**Send**" button at the bottom and your note is on the way to us.
- 8 Once we have responded to your mail, you will see the mailbox at the top left of THOMAS, flashing with its flag up, indicating that you have "**Genius Mail**" (it will also flag for your office's internal mail communications through THOMAS).

Click, send, and receive. Feel free to give it a test run, and feel free to send us comments and let us know how much you like eTHOMAS v9 and our Genius Mail solution for you.

Do you have a favorite THOMAS Tip or Trick you'd like to share? Send us your favorite Tip or Trick at newsletter2009@geniussolutions.com, if we use your Tip or Trick we will send you a Genius Solutions' Goodie as a thank-you.



Q. I am the lone biller for my office or for two separate offices for my doctor. Sometimes I work from home or have to connect to work on one office's billing from the other. How can I work on THOMAS from some place other than at the office proper?

A. You would want to connect remotely. Remote Connectivity is when your server is at office A and you are trying to connect with it from office B, or from home. It could also be an office connecting to their biller, where their data is stored or vice versa. It is also how we connect with you computer to computer to help support you with THOMAS.

A couple of good, economical options for a lone biller who might want to connect remotely, to work on her/his work computer from home would be:

- **Programs (like PC Anywhere)**
- **Web-based/Internet (like gotomypc.com or logmein.com)**
- **Remote Desktop**

Programs, like **PC Anywhere**—connect from one computer to another by using a program where one computer is the host and the other is the remote. The host needs to be “waiting” and an authorized remote user can then connect and use the host computer as if they were there. Only one person can use the host computer in the office, someone in the office, or a remote user. If you are just trying to connect to your office computer to check something, do some light work, or for a biller who might want to connect and work after hours, this can be a good option.

A program like PC Anywhere is generally a bit more secure than using the internet options, but you also generally have to have your networking person set you up to use the program over the internet (usually they have to adjust your office firewall to allow this). You will have to buy the program and sometimes licenses for additional computers (more than two- a single host and single remote) to use program. You often will have the option to connect over dial up (meaning that you will need a fax line and a modem with each computer- this method can also be very slow), but it is most preferable to have a high speed internet connection (and web access from both computers) for this option.

Web-based (internet), like **gotomypc.com** or **logmein.com**— works like a “program” to connect, only the program exists on the Internet itself, you don't have to buy it for your computer. One computer is the host and an authorized remote user connects and uses the host computer as if they were there. Only one person can use the host computer in the office, someone in the office, or a remote user. Again, if you are just trying to connect to your office computer to check something, do some light work, or work after hours, this can be a great option.

Depending upon what kind of features you want to use, these sites can run from “free”, to a minimal monthly charge. Remember, you will need access to the internet to use them (from both computers).

Remote Desktop— (formerly called Terminal Services Client) is direct connection from one computer to another where the remote user logs onto the computer and is the person controlling the computer they are connected to. It is a form of remote administration. An example would be how Dell or HP might connect to your computer to help diagnose a problem for you. In order to use remote desktop, a client (or remote person) would use a remote desktop client to connect to the allowed work computer. You would use an internet connection with this method and would want a static IP address for this option.

Remember that for each one of these options, whatever computer the biller is connected to at the office is not usable by anyone at the office. Only one person can use the host computer at a time, either someone at the office or the remote person. When someone is remotely connected, they are using that computer as if they were in the office.

For any connection method using the internet, the recommendation would be to use a high speed internet connection. The next recommendation would be to have a static IP address for the server or terminal server (to have a static, or fixed IP address you would need to talk to your ISP-Internet Service Provider), and there will generally be a charge involved for this service option.

For something like an “internet” or the “program” type connection you may be ok without a static IP address. When you have static (or fixed) IP address you have a permanent address or web-type “phone” number that is always the same. You know what it is, it is stable, and it can easily be set up remotely. When you have a dynamic IP address, your web address or “phone” number changes: sometimes it only changes each time you reset your router, sometimes each time you log on, but it can change constantly (as often as every 5-15 minutes) which can be really annoying and cause many problems when you are connected or trying to connect. With a dynamic IP address and PC Anywhere or gotomypc.com, when your IP address changes, you will get kicked off of your connection, because your address changed. Then you have to have someone at the office that you can call to let you know what the change is and help you to re-set up. Ok, there are some issues, but a lone biller really can be in more than one place at once.

The Management Corner- Missed Cash Opportunities

By Ken Bohr, Co-Founder of Genius Solutions, Inc.

There are things that you can be doing now, in your office to help keep your patient loads high and your cash flowing in these hard times. To do this you need to keep your cash flow steady, you can do this by managing your appointments, following up on recall procedures, and consistently collecting the money due to you.

Missed Appointments

One of the easiest things you can do is to make sure that you have as few missed appointments as possible. We all know how easy it is to forget an appointment in the middle of our busy lives, especially when the appointment was made months ago. Control your office time and money flow by ensuring that what you have planned is accurate. If you can remind and confirm appointments, you can manage your office better. Even if the result of calling is a bunch of cancellations, it is better to know that you have the time open, and can then be more available for last minute call-ups, or perhaps even be able to allow patients to bump up their times or dates. Not only does it give you more timely options, but it also allows you to give your patients more timely options. True patient service.

Appointment reminders and confirmations can be done in several ways:

- You can call your patients a day or two before the appointment to remind or confirm with them.
- You can e-mail your patients a day or two before the appointment to remind or confirm with them.
- You can use an automated service or application like ADAMS to call for you, letting the program or application make the calls and report back to you on the status of each call made.

Recall

Don't let your patients forget to stay on top of their health. Another way to keep your patient flow high and more consistent would be to use the built-in recall features of THOMAS to know and generate patient reminders, "that it's time to revisit the office". These reminders may be for an annual physical, a mammogram, a colonoscopy, blood tests, etc, they are for things that your office performs, at certain intervals, for your patients (i.e. bi-monthly, yearly, every 5 years). Again, often these are overlooked needs of your patients, and overlooked sources of income for your office.

Collections

Make sure that you are asking for and receiving payments in a timely manner.

Upfront co-pay collection. Stay on top of your patient payments from the get-go. Make sure to collect co-pays and any necessary pre-pays up front while the service is fresh and your patient is in front of you. To facilitate this, you need to make sure that you check patient participation and benefits regularly to know what they owe. Next, let your patients know what you expect of them. Have some signs printed nicely and framed where they check in and check out that lets them know you expect them to pay their co-pay or any outstanding balances before they leave that day.

Produce timely patient statements for the amounts your patients owe. You might also look into cycle statement billings rather than once a month statement billings to keep your flow and your work load more manageable and more constant. This can be done manually in your office, by printing statements and mailing them out from THOMAS. Another option is to outsource your patient statement printing and mailing to an electronic service. You can do this from THOMAS by setting up an electronic statements account. When you set up an E-Statement account, you can upload an electronic patient statement file, similar to what you would send for your billing, and then your statements are printed, stuffed, and mailed out for you. You can use the service as much or as little as you like. You are only charged for what you use.

Third-party Collections. For any outstanding balances, you may consider sending a series of pre-collection (prior to sending an account to collection) letters. This can be done, by you at your office, but often it is probably easiest through a third-party such as GreenFlagSM Profit Recovery. GreenFlag will send the collections letters and they get to be the "bad guy". You, on the other hand, get to cut the deals and help your patients, remaining as the "good guys".

Keeping your cash flow and your patient flow "up" is a matter of commitment to follow up, and THOMAS is already set up to help you do this. If you have any questions regarding how to do any of these things with THOMAS, or what they are, please call support for assistance.



School THOMAS

Do you have THOMAS in your classroom?

Henry Ford Community College Does! *By Penny Henriksen, Newsletter Editor*



In case you didn't already know it, eTHOMAS is in the classroom now, especially here in Michigan. eTHOMAS has

been sweeping the state. Many schools that were previously using dTHOMAS have recently taken the step into eTHOMAS. Over the last year Aress Academy in Southfield, C.A.R. Training, Clintondale Training School in Clinton Township, Detroit Business Institute in Southfield & Riverview, and Henry Ford Community College have all come on over to the "e" side. The feedback has all been great! We appreciate all of the fine comments that have been shared with us.

THOMAS

Fans Tried and True

Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, Michigan is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. Their Medical Assistant program has been a part of the college for over 40 of those years. They are a long standing tradition of excellence. Genius' THOMAS program has been a part of their tradition for almost a decade. I had the opportunity to speak with and interview two fantastic ladies that keep this tradition alive at Henry Ford. They keep continually raising the bar of excellence for their students and the community: Helen Weeks, Medical Office Assistant Program Director; and Deb Wiltshire, Health Careers Co-op Specialist.

Helen said that she has been with HFCC for over seven years now and that they had dTHOMAS when she first got there. As a veteran in healthcare administration, billing, and training with more than 35 years of experience, Helen has seen and used many systems. She said that she really loved the ease of use that THOMAS brought to the classroom. Now that they have moved over to eTHOMAS, she couldn't say enough good things about it. She was so kind, it made me blush and proud to be a small part of the eTHOMAS experience. She said that of all the programs she's used, eTHOMAS was the easiest to use, the least threatening for the students to learn, and she loved the user friendly graphics, the ability to add in patient photos and insurance cards, and the appointment book. Helen also mentioned that they have had several students that haven't been in a class for over 20 years, displaced auto workers hitting the books (& computers) anew, to pick up new skills. eTHOMAS has been easy enough to use, that truly anyone can use it.



Did I mention that Helen is not only the Program director, but a very busy instructor at HFCC in both their Clinic and Administrative classes? She works with the THOMAS program and the students daily. Besides all of the advantages that are in eTHOMAS itself, she said that it is more than just the billing options that make eTHOMAS valuable in the classroom. Helen said that the students not only gain valuable, real world experience, but that eTHOMAS enhances the students overall computer abilities. "Once the students learn how to master the software, even if they get into an office that is not using THOMAS, they can incorporate the valuable computer skills they've already learned by using it (THOMAS) to more readily pick up and use whatever software is present. They are learning real computer skills with THOMAS, not just a billing program."

Helen also mentioned how their program is "growing by leaps and bounds". With five current programs focused on healthcare specialties I can see why. They have certificate programs in Medical Assistant, Medical Insurance Specialist, Medical Receptionist. And, they have two Associate degree programs where the students take beefed up, additional, business classes and earn a degree in: Medical Practice - Clinical Management (Associate in Applied Science), and Medical Practice/Facility Business Management (Associate in Business). They keep their class sizes deliberately small so that the teachers can foster one-on-one relationships with the students to not only teach, but mentor them in their classes, labs, and within the profession.



Co-op Internships with
eTHOMAS
built in

HFCC strongly recommends that their MIS (Medical Insurance Specialist) students participate in co-op programs. When it comes to co-op, just like the word, co-op takes two parts: a student who has and is training in the field, chomping at the bit for some experience, AND an office, hospital, or clinic that could use some good, trained help and is willing to temporarily foster and mentor some good people.



ditor



Helen and Deb both said that the students, who can list THOMAS on their resumes, do get a real boost from having that experience and having it on their resume, but they both keep saying- “there is no substitute for actual work experience”. Getting your toe in the door, especially now-a-days, is extremely difficult for a new student straight out of school. Getting well trained billing, coding, and business oriented office staff members can also be both difficult and risky for a medical office. How do you find a good “just the right” person? Well, you may find that Deb Wiltshire, HFCC Health Careers Co-op Specialist could have the answer to that question.

Deb is working hard to get the HFCC healthcare Associate program students into 16 week co-op sessions. She says that she wants the students to work a minimum of 10 hours a week applying their developing medical coding, billing, management, and business skills in the real world, and a working office is the best way. Deb says that some students are working 10 hours a week, and some are working as many as 30+ hours a week. A paid internship can also help pay for gas and school expenses (as a former student I can tell you that it is nice to be able to afford lunch too!).

Doctors, a co-op internship is a great opportunity for you to get extra, quality, eTHOMAS trained help, and to check out a possible future employee. Or, you may choose to mentor many students and always have a fresh face, fresh ideas, and new energy at your office. You'll be giving many students their first job opportunity, and for others you may be a renewed opportunity. Once you start co-op-ing, you'll never want to stop! You will find that you are just as excited to have them, as they are to be there, and just watch the energy that will come into your office as each student brings their gifts and talents to share with your staff and patients. Deb will come out to your office, talk to you about the program, see what your needs are, and match you up with students that fit your bill. How can you lose? It is definitely a “Win-Win” situation.

Benefits for the Students:

- Credit towards graduation
- Actual work experience (double bonus points if they get to use their eTHOMAS training)
- Employer contacts
- Something great to add to their new resume
- Increased self-confidence in themselves and their abilities
- A chance to work with great mentors
- Some money to help with expenses

Benefits for the Doctors/Offices:

- Training and Trained eTHOMAS billers and Coders w/ management and business education backgrounds
- An opportunity to try out carefully selected people in your office (you can choose to interview the candidates or let Deb do the interviewing and selecting for you)
- Co-op students that are later hired have a much higher retention rate
- Increase the energy and freshness of your office by having excited new talent on your team
- Additional staffing flexibility for you and your office
- Per HFCC's information: “Exempts employers from paying unemployment compensation taxes on wages of co-op students if they are enrolled in a qualified co-op program and from paying unemployment compensation to students released from these programs.”

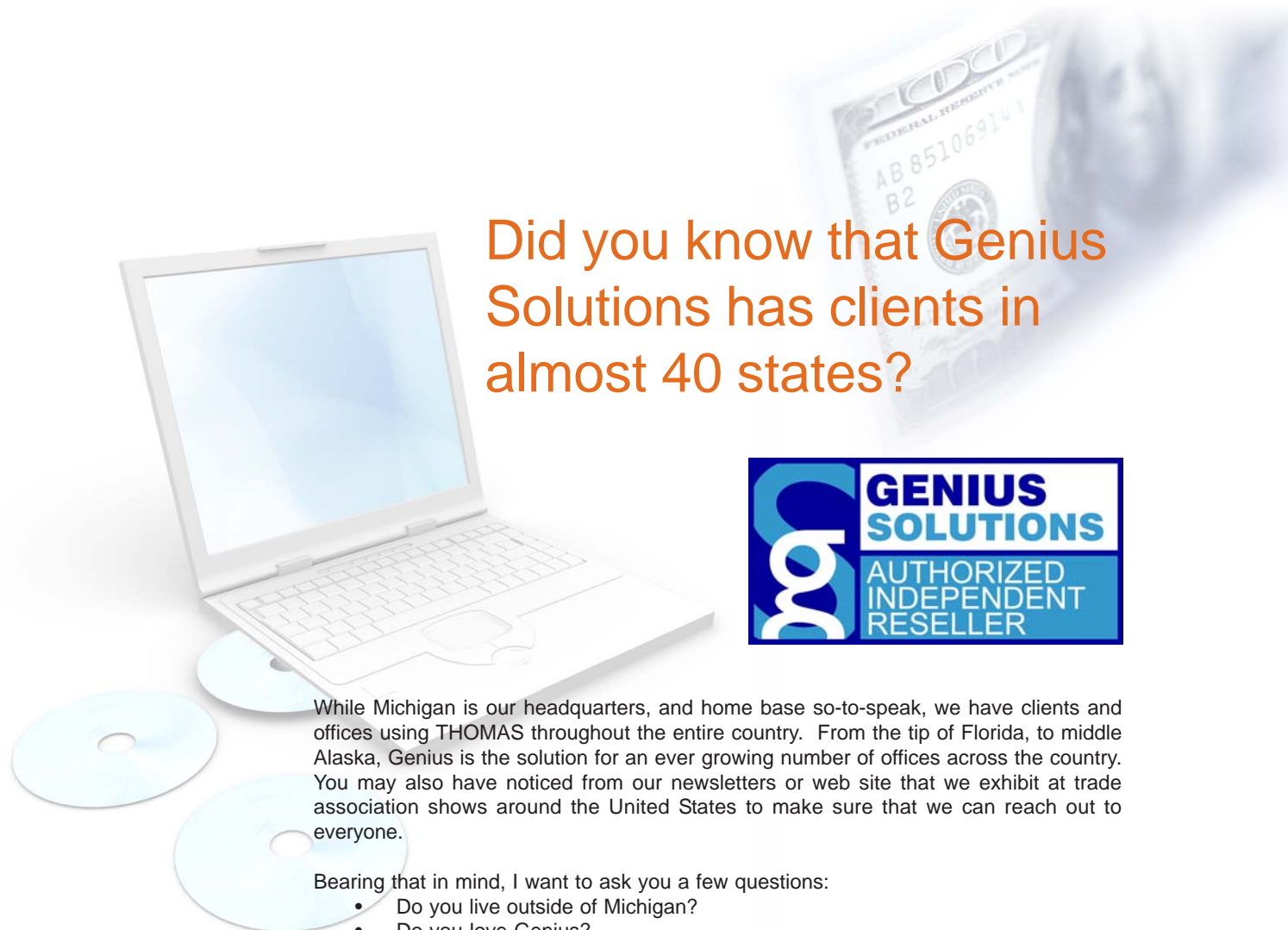
If HFCC isn't close enough to your office, check with one of the colleges that may be closer. Many schools offer similar opportunities for intern/externships with their students. And by all means if you check with a college and they don't have eTHOMAS in the classroom, let us know and we'll ask them – “Why not?” for you!

As you can see, we are very excited to see programs like HFCC out helping their students to do well. We strongly believe in education and are committed to seeing programs like HFCC flourish here in Michigan. We have also begun to branch out to schools nationwide and are looking forward to continuing on in our own path of THOMAS educational excellence. It is a joy for us to help make learning interesting and real-world based. If you would like information on getting eTHOMAS into your classroom, please call us at 586-751-9080, and say “I want to know about School THOMAS” and your wish will be granted. (You can also e-mail us at schoolTHOMAS@geniussolutions.com).

For more information about HFCC's programs you can check out their web site at <http://www.hfcc.edu/>

For more information about the HFCC Co-op Internship Program and how you can be a part of it contact:
Helen Weeks, Medical Office Assistant Program Director, 313-845-6466, HMWeeks@hfcc.edu
Deb Wiltshire, Health Careers Co-op Specialist, 313-317-1723, DAWiltshire@hfcc.edu

Channel Partner "Reseller" Program



Did you know that Genius Solutions has clients in almost 40 states?



While Michigan is our headquarters, and home base so-to-speak, we have clients and offices using THOMAS throughout the entire country. From the tip of Florida, to middle Alaska, Genius is the solution for an ever growing number of offices across the country. You may also have noticed from our newsletters or web site that we exhibit at trade association shows around the United States to make sure that we can reach out to everyone.

Bearing that in mind, I want to ask you a few questions:

- Do you live outside of Michigan?
- Do you love Genius?
- Are you always telling others about us?
- Do you spend as much time showing, glowing, and demonstrating Genius as you do using it?

Well, we might have a perfect, additional solution for you—consider becoming a **Channel Partner** of Genius products and solutions. Do what you do best, show and tell people about Genius, and grow your own Genius Business. Don't want to be a reseller, but you still love Genius? You can still tell your friends about Genius Solutions and we'll still love you even more.

Are you a single-source, best-in-breed, medical specialty solution looking to add some Genius billing and management power to your ride? You too can be "Powered by Genius"; talk to us about how you can add our Genius solutions to yours, so that you can offer a complete solution to your clients.

What we need today aren't more problems, we need more Genius Solutions!

For more information, please contact **May Kamon**, our Channel Partner Representative at may2@geniussolutions.com, or you can call her at (586) 243-6340 cellular number or (800) 645-0955 office toll free number, and she'll fill you in on all of the details.

Winter Blahs?

Six ways to do something about it!



I am definitely not a winter kind of gal. I don't do anything that properly belongs in the winter: tripping across the country on my motorcycle, long walks with my dog, kayaking, working in the yard, working on my truck, warm sunshine, happy deserts, etc. Anyway, you can see quite clearly that I am NOT, nor will I ever be, a winter person. Honestly, winter is that yearly death that buries us inside for months at a time here in Michigan. To top it off, it started a couple months early this year and it may be one of those years where we still get snow in May (yep, I remember having a snow day on May 21st before). As I was wallowing in lack of warmth and sunshine, I thought, gosh, I can't be the only one. Perhaps others are suffering as I am. Bearing that deep, heart-felt thought in mind, I wanted to work on some genius solutions, to help you relieve your winter blah-ness, and get properly prepared for spring. So here goes.

1

First off, need I say it- we need light, sunlight is best. Do open your windows and try to get out in it for even 15 minutes a day. It will help to relieve the cabin fever/hibernation death feel, and keep you from becoming a creature of the night, for when the sun is blazing over a long spring, summer, or fall day. You'd hate to fry your optics on the first really good day of spring, right? So prepare by enjoying a little brightness every day that you can manage it.

2

Secondly, have some fun or get some work done! It's a great excuse to do those "inside" things that you feel guilty about doing when the sun is warm and shining. You can clean the basement, organize the pantry, and bring the motorcycle in and do a full check and wax. You can also go to a museum, catch the latest Disney flick with the kids, or stay in as a family and totally jam out together with Rock Band (win fans and let the kids wear leather-studded bras in an acceptable environment). Do some crafts or develop a new hobby (I've been working on a longbow).

3

Thirdly, cook something. Sure anyone can attempt a bar-b-que in the summer, but what about some homemade chili, chocolate chip cookies, try making cinnamon rolls from scratch. Food is fantastic! And it can be very warm and comforting, like sunlight on a really grey and snowy day. Don't bulk up, perk up! Cut back on heavy carbohydrates and pump up on some serotonin (I read somewhere that cashews were a good source). Try to stay towards the "food" side, rather than the "fat" side with warm chili, breads with good fiber and low fat content, and try to only pig out on the cookies once a season, not once or twice a week.

4

Fourthly, now that we're past the food, is fitness. Look into some exercise. I know, I'm with you, I prefer to be "out" doing something, but when you're in, you can still have some fun. Go swimming. Try belly dancing. Heck, check out your cable TV for an ever streaming variety of fun new things to try like salsa-cardio-kick-fit. You could even take your sweetheart out for some Argentinean Tango lessons and make it a "hot" date.

5

Fifth, get a jump-start on your gardening. Green is good! Plants and flowers always make things more spring-y. You can start prepping and germinating many of your plants early, so that when the weather does suddenly become "good", you are good to go. If you are not a gardener, you can still treat yourself to a bouquet of flowers and feel like you were in the spring sun for a week.

6

Don't forget to reward yourself as you bravely fight your way through the winter doldrums. When you work out, eat right, "do" something, don't forget to give back- to yourself. Get a massage to relax from the exercise. Go out to dinner to reward yourself for not eating the extra batch of cookies. Get a new dress to Tango. Use some of that gardening know-how for good: make your own facial (vegetables put to a good use). And never forget the simple joy of curling up on the couch, faithful puppy at your side, warm cocoa on the table next to you, and holding that new novel you've been eyeing.

There you go, six stylish and fun ways to survive until spring. Honestly, I'm hoping that this article is like waiting for the proverbial check in the mail. As soon as you get this (because I actually wrote all of this up) may we all be showered in sunshine and warmth. You may then tuck this article away until next winter, when the blahs start all over again.



UPDATE TO eTHOMAS v9!

If you haven't updated to eTHOMAS version 9 yet, I strongly recommend that you do so A.S.A.P. so that you take advantage of new features like Genius on the Web and Genius Mail. There is no charge for current eTHOMAS users. Simply update, accept the end user agreement, open eTHOMAS and check out the "What's New" area, under the "Messaging" tab to get started!

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Genius Solutions' Holiday Schedule

- Memorial Day-May 25 (Monday)
- Independence Day-July 6 (Monday)