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Medical Transcription Careers, Jobs, and Training Information

Medical Transcription Career and Job Highlights

- There are many good job opportunities.
- A Medical transcriptionist who has finished a postsecondary training program at a vocational school or community college is what employers are looking for.
- Several medical transcriptionists telecommute from offices at home, where they work or subcontract for hospitals and transcription services. They can also work independently as a contractor, being self-employed.
- On average, 40% were employees of hospitals and an additional 30% were employees in a physician's practice.

Medical Transcription Career Overview

A medical transcriptionist transcribes dictated recordings from healthcare specialists and physicians and makes reports, correspondence, or other materials regarding administration. This process is done by using a headset to hear the recordings and a foot pedal for any necessary pauses. As they listen, the medical transcriptionist types the information on a computer or word processor while editing and clarifying any grammatical errors. Some documents that are done include: release summaries, reports of medical history and physical examination, reports of operations, reports of consultations, reports of autopsies, studies of diagnosing images, notes of progress, and letters of referrals. These documents are then returned to the physician or specialist by the medical transcriptionist for further approval and correcting. All of this is necessary for permanent keeping of these documents.

Medical transcriptionists must understand terms associated with medicine, procedures used to diagnose, comprehend assessments of treatments and have knowledge in physiology, anatomy, and pharmacology. Additionally, they must translate terms into their full form that are abbreviated or said in medical language. They can access standard healthcare references for assistance in understanding the terminology, which can be found electronically or printed out. The Internet may be a good source. Compliance with certain requirements regarding medical record format is necessary as well as with other requirements dealing with ethics to ensure patient confidentiality.

Experienced transcriptionists proofread medical reports to point out errors or discrepancies and to make necessary corrections. To decrease the possibility of patients receiving improper or damaging treatment, transcriptionists must have the ability to comprehend and accurately transcribe assessments of patients.

Presently, transcriptionists are transmitted dictation from physicians by means of digital or analog dictating equipment. An increasing common way for transmitting documentation is through the Internet. This is convenient for transcriptionists because they can receive and return dictation immediately through the Internet, allowing for quick client approval. An additional trend is being used called speech recognition technology. This creates drafts of reports by electronically translating sounds into text. It is then necessary to edit the reports for punctuation, grammar and errors in translation; format the reports; and ensure reports are medically reliable. Speech recognition technology is usually used by transcriptionists working in areas with regular terminology, such as radiology or pathology. Nevertheless, as technology becomes more advanced, speech recognition technology will become even more popular.

Some additional duties for medical transcriptionists working in clinics and physicians' offices may include: checking in patients, scheduling appointments, and handling the phone and mail. When written reports are of spoken words are mandatory for communication, keeping records, or legality, medical transcriptionists translate reports word for word of speeches, conversations, legal proceedings, meetings, and other events.

Most medical transcriptionists enjoy comfortable surroundings including offices, hospitals, transcription service offices, clinics, laboratories, libraries of medicine, facilities provided by the government, or even home. Several medical transcriptionists telecommute from offices at home working or subcontracting for hospitals and transcription services. They can also work independently as a contractor, being self-employed.

This occupation presents some risks from sitting in the same place and position for extended periods of time. Medical transcriptionists suffer from problems with backs, wrists, necks, and eyes as a result of strain. They also are in danger of carpal tunnel syndrome which is caused by repetitive motion. Accuracy and production factor into the stress.

The standard week for several medical transcriptionists is 40 hours. However, those who are self-employed work irregular hours which include part-time, evenings, weekends, or being on-call constantly.

Medical Transcription Career Training and Job Qualifications

Transcriptionists are most eligible when they have completed postsecondary training through vocational schools, community colleges, and distance-learning programs. It is highly recommended for medical transcriptionists to complete a 1-year certificate program or 2-year associate degree that encompasses work in anatomy, medical terminology, legality in healthcare documentation, and grammar and punctuation in English. Several of these programs provide on-the-job experience under supervision. On-the-job training may be adequate for some, especially

those who have come from another medical field, such as nursing or medical administration.

The American Association for Medical Transcription (AAMT) awards the voluntary Certified Medical Transcriptionist (CMT) to medical transcriptionists who pass written and practical examinations. Certification ensures competence, as is also customary in other fields. Medical transcriptionists are asked to keep abilities updated because medical terminology is always developing. CMTs must continually earn education credits every three years in order to remain certified.

It is not enough to comprehend medical terminology. They must also be well-educated in skills like grammar and punctuation, in word-processing, in using personal computers. It is necessary to perform good listening skills and regular hearing acuity. Pre-employment tests are also required for most potential applicants.

Promotions to supervisory positions, working from home, editing, consulting, or instructing can be achieved with experience. Other positions are available with further knowledge and education, such as medical records and health information technicians, medical records and health information administrators, or medical coders.

Medical Transcription Job and Employment Opportunities

Opportunities for employment will be great. This job is estimated to grow faster than the average through the year 2012 among all occupations. An increasing population and aging society contribute to this progression. The older age category usually receives medical care requiring documentation such as medical tests, procedures, or treatments. Transcription services will continue to grow because of the constant need for electronic documentation, which is conveniently shared among regulators, providers, third-party payers, and clients. More medical transcriptionists will be required to change patients' records, check grammar, and find mistakes in medical records.

Contracting out transcription work across the world and improvements in speech recognition technology isn't projected to dramatically reduce the need for well-trained medical transcriptionists nationally. Contracting out transcription work out of the country, to countries such as India, has become increasingly popular as conveying confidential health information over the Internet has become more protected. Nevertheless, the demand for overseas transcription services is expected to complement the demand for well-trained national medical transcriptionists. Speech-recognition technology permits health professionals such as physicians to record medical reports to a computer, producing an instant electronic document. Regardless of the developments in this technology, it has been complicated for the software to recognize and evaluate the voice of a human and the English language because it is so different. Consequently, there will persist to be a need for capable medical transcriptionists to recognize and properly fix the unavoidable errors caused by speech recognition systems, and generate an ultimate document.

Hospitals will continue to utilize several medical transcriptionists; however, job expansion in hospitals will not be as quick as in other industries. Rapid employment expansion in physicians' offices and other health specialists should result from escalating demand for standardized

records. This growth should be considerably in large group practices.