



## Overview

### Scope of Practice

- The **medical transcriptionist (MT)** is an allied health professional who deals with the process of converting voice-recorded reports from physicians and/or other healthcare professionals into written or text format.
- The MT is a **medical language specialist** who is aware of the:
  - standards and requirements that apply to the **patient's health record**
  - legal significance of **medical transcripts**
- The MT is the **primary route of communication** between the physician and other healthcare providers who access patient medical records.
- Many types of patient care documents exist, including:
  - histories and physical examinations
  - progress reports
  - emergency room notes
  - consultations
  - operative reports
  - discharge summaries
  - clinic notes
  - referral letters
  - radiology reports
  - pathology reports
  - an array of documentation spanning more than 60 medical specialties and subspecialties
- MTs often work for hospitals, clinics, physician offices, national transcription services or other medical offices.
- The practice of medical transcription is changing rapidly; advances in technology require a professional who is comfortable with the more technical aspects of documentation in an ever-changing electronic environment.

### Medical Transcription Process

- When the patient visits a doctor, the doctor spends time with the patient discussing his/her medical problems, including past history and/or problems.
  - The doctor performs a **physical examination** and may request various **laboratory tests** and/or **diagnostic studies**, as well as prescribing medication and possibly recommending a **surgical procedure**.
  - The doctor makes a **diagnosis** and decides on a **plan of treatment** for the patient, which he/she then discusses with and explains to the patient.
- After the patient leaves the office, the doctor uses a **voice-recording device** to record the information about the **patient encounter**.
- This information may be recorded into a hand-held cassette recorder or into a regular telephone that dials into a central server located in the hospital or transcription service office; either way, the report is "held" for the transcriptionist.
- The MT then accesses this report, which is received as a **voice file** or **cassette recording**.
- The MT then listens to the **dictation** and **transcribes** it into the required format for the medical record.
- This medical record is considered a legal document.**
- The next time the patient visits the doctor, the doctor will call for the medical

### Skills, knowledge & procedures

- Medical transcriptionists (MTs) are more than just data-entry operators or mere typists working in the healthcare industry.
- MTs need to have the skills required for creating **precise and accurate medical records**; besides having these skills, they need to constantly improvise and hone their skill-sets.
- MTs are expected to be proficient in English language use and grammar, medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, disease processes, and medical record-keeping, as well as having advanced proofreading and editing skills, versatility in the use of transcription equipment and computers, and the highly developed analytical skills and deductive reasoning necessary to convert dictated sounds into meaningful form.
- These skill-sets are described in detail in the sections that follow, but can be summarized as:
  - Keyboard Kinetics & Computer Literacy
  - English Language Proficiency – Grammar, Sentence Structure, Spelling, Punctuation, Numbers & Abbreviations
  - Medical Terminology
  - Editing & Proofreading Medical Dictation & Transcription
  - Medical Reports
  - Human Anatomy & Physiology
  - Concepts of Disease
  - Medical & Surgical Procedures
  - Pharmacology, Diagnostic Imaging & Laboratory Medicine
  - Medicolegal Issues

#### The MT Knows

Logic and critical thinking are key to accurate transcription documents and, thereby, key to effective patient care.

Subhead goes here

- record or the patient's entire chart, which will contain all reports from previous encounters.
- It is very important to have a properly formatted, thoroughly edited, and carefully reviewed medical transcription document—if the MT accidentally types a **wrong medication** or the **wrong diagnosis**, the **patient can be at risk if the doctor does not review the document for accuracy**.
- Both the doctor and the MT play an important role in making sure that the transcribed dictation is correct and accurate.
- The doctor should speak **slowly and clearly**, especially when dictating medications or details of diseases and conditions, and the MT must possess:
  - hearing acuity
  - medical knowledge
  - good reading comprehension
  - fact-checking skills (in order to check references when in doubt about the dictation)
- The MT is bound to **transcribe verbatim** (exactly what is said) and make **no changes**, but has the option to flag any report inconsistencies.
  - on some occasions, doctors do not speak clearly, or voice files are garbled.
- Some doctors are, unfortunately, time-challenged and need to dictate their reports quickly (as in ER reports).
  - in addition, there are many regional and/or national accents and mispronunciations of words with which the MT must contend.
- It is **imperative** that the MT look up the correct spelling of complex medical terms, medications, obvious dosage or dictation errors—this is a large part of the job of the MT, and, when in doubt, he/she should **"flag" a report**.
  - a "flag" on a report requires the dictator to fill in a blank on a finished report, which has been returned to him/her, before it is considered complete.
- MTs are never, ever permitted to guess, or "just put anything" in a report transcription!
- Furthermore, medicine is constantly changing—new equipment, new medical devices and new medications enter the market on a daily basis, and the MT needs to be a critical thinker and to research and find the meanings of these new words.
  - MTs need to have access to, or keep on hand, an up-to-date library to quickly facilitate the correctly spelled insertion of every device, procedure and/or medication dictated.

### Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDI)

- The Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDI) is of crucial importance to the MT.
- The AHDI curriculum is followed by many schools in the United States that offer medical transcription as a course.
- Key documents produced by the AHDI are:
  - Medical Transcriptionist Bill of Rights
  - AHDI Code of Ethics
- To read these documents in their entirety and/or to learn more about AHDI, visit their Web site: [www.ahdionline.org](http://www.ahdionline.org)

### Keyboard kinetics & computer literacy

- Typing speed** is important in the productivity of a transcriptionist.
  - techniques for building speed and efficiency on the keyboard are invaluable tools for improving typing speed.
  - usually, the industry requirement is **60–80 words per minute (wpm)**.
- The MT must also possess strong **computer skills**, with general knowledge of and ability to operate designated **dictation and transcription equipment**.
- The MT must be able to use basic features of word processing programs:
  - inserting and deleting text
  - creating macros
  - saving changes/features
- The MT must be able to **identify and secure confidentiality** issues and use:
  - password protection
  - antivirus software
  - encryption
- The MT must be able to:
  - differentiate between **stand-alone** and **networked computers**
  - understand the basic concepts of dictation and **transcription technology**
- MTs have many types of **equipment and reference materials** at their fingertips; basic equipment available includes:
  - transcriber\*
  - computer
  - current word-processing software
  - printer



# Medical Transcription Study Guide

**Clifford Lane**



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