



FEATURE

How to Get a Job as a Medical Transcriptionist

A medical transcriptionist is a person who transcribes the voice recordings of physicians into reports and letters that either go in patient files or are sent to specialists. Many physicians who are in private practice hire this type of personnel to either come into the office on a part time basis or to do the work from home. Working from home saves the physician money in not having to have full office staff. Many other physicians require the office administration to perform this duty as part of the regular duties.

The equipment that you will use as a medical transcriptionist consists of a voice recorder, headphones and a foot pedal that you can pause while you type sections of the recording or go back and reread or make corrections. You will type the words you hear on the computer using a word processing program. When finished you print out the report and either place it in the appropriate file or pass it along to the physician for his/her signature. The types of documents you may have to transcribe in this way include surgery reports, discharge or admission reports, and results of X-rays, ultrasounds or other diagnostic procedures that are important for a diagnosis.

An understanding of medical terminology is an important part of the job of medical transcriptionist. You need to be able to understand what the physician is saying and be able to spell the words correctly. Any

abbreviations used in the recording must be written out when you transcribe them in the reports. You do have a reference book to help you when you are performing this task. There is also a specific style you have to use when typing these reports and letters that conform to the standards set down by the field of medicine. The accuracy of these reports is of utmost importance because the slightest typing mistake could make the difference in a patient receiving the correct diagnosis.

In order to be hired as a medical transcriptionist, you must graduate from a one or two year course from a technical or vocational college. The program will include courses in medical terminology, anatomy and physiology. Legal issues in dealing with medical information and files as well as courses in correct English grammar, spelling and punctuation. You can also obtain certification in this field

from the Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity. Enrollment in the program is voluntary, but you can take the courses leading to a certificate as a Registered Medical Transcriptionist or a Certified Medical Transcriptionist. Having these certifications is very advantageous for those just starting out in this profession. You do need experience before you take the examinations and you must take continuing education courses to renew the certificates every three years.

Confidentiality is important in this job. You will be dealing with all kinds of private information about the patients so you must be a person of integrity and professionalism. You do need excellent hearing and to demonstrate that you can do the job well some employers will require that you take a pre-employment test.

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