

## **MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION FACT SHEET**

- **What is medical transcription?** In the broadest sense, medical transcription is the act of translating from oral to written form (on paper or electronically) the record of a person's medical history, diagnosis, treatment, prognosis, and outcome. Medical transcription requires a practical knowledge of medical language relating to anatomy, physiology, disease processes, pharmacology, laboratory medicine, and the internal organization of medical reports. A medical transcriptionist is truly a medical language specialist who must be aware of standards and requirements that apply to the health record, as well as the legal significance of medical transcripts.

- **What training is required?** Individuals interested in this profession should attend a training program that specializes in medical transcription. Medical transcription programs vary in length from 9 to 24 months and can be campus-based or online distance learning programs.

The medical transcription program approval process was instituted by the American Association for Medical Transcription (AAMT) to encourage compliance with AAMT's *Model Curriculum for Medical Transcription*, maintain sound educational programming, produce competent entry-level medical transcriptionists, and provide assurance to the public of consistency and quality outcomes for medical transcription education. Programs must comply with specific educational and institutional criteria as established by AAMT.

- **What is the cost of training?** The medical transcription programs that have achieved approval range in cost from \$1320 to \$5170 – with the average cost being \$3000. This includes tuition and books.

- **What can the average medical transcriptionist expect to earn?** Medical transcriptionists had median hourly earnings of \$13.64 in May 2004. The middle 50 percent earned between \$11.50 and \$16.32. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$9.67, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$19.11.<sup>1</sup>

- **What is the job outlook for medical transcription?** Employment of medical transcriptionists is projected to grow faster than average for all occupations through 2014. Demand for medical transcription services will be spurred by a growing and aging population. A high level of demand for transcription services also will be sustained by the continued need for electronic documentation that can easily be shared among providers, third-party payers, regulators, consumers, and health information systems. Growing numbers of medical transcriptionists will be needed to amend patients' records, edit documents from speech recognition systems, and identify discrepancies in medical reports.<sup>1</sup>

1: Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006-07 Edition*, Medical Transcriptionists, on the Internet at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos271.htm> (visited April 10, 2007)