



A CAREER IN MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION: IS IT FOR YOU

You've very likely heard of someone who is making a good living as a medical transcriptionist. He or she might even be working from the comfort of their home. And you've probably asked yourself if this might be a career option for you. It may well be. Let's take a look at the facts. What exactly is medical transcription? In the course of their work, doctors and other healthcare professionals make dictated recordings of various things including physical examination observations, patient history, operative reports, referral letters, discharge summaries, observations regarding imaging data and so on. A medical transcriptionist listens to these recordings and transcribes them into medical reports, correspondence, etc. She listens to a segment of recording, pauses the playback and keys in what is said before moving on to the next segment. She may do some editing for better grammar and clarity. The transcribed document is sent back to the health care provider who then reviews it for accuracy and gets it signed. These documents become part of the patient's medical history records and perhaps insurance records. To be effective at this job, you should understand medical terminology well. That includes anatomy, pharmacology, diagnostic procedures, treatment assessments and more. Many distance education programs, colleges and vocational schools offer post-secondary training in medical transcription. Having a degree is not essential. With a home-study course, you can usually pick up the necessary knowledge within a year, often in less than nine months. You can find work in hospitals, laboratories, physician's offices, firms offering transcription services, government medical facilities and so on. Working from home is also a possibility and many employers offer work-at-home options for transcriptionists. Apart from that, many individuals work as independent contractors. With experience, it is possible to move into supervisory positions, which include editing work, teaching, consulting, etc. What equipment would you need, if you wanted to do medical transcription at home? Not very much -- a computer with a medical spellchecker, printer, a transcriber and reference books are about all you need. To help you save on the actual typing, a word expander utility might help. If you are on a tight budget, buy second hand equipment will do just as well. Medical transcription work does call for certain skills and mindset. Apart from basic computer skills, you must be detail oriented. If detail work bores you to tears, this might not be the career for you. You must know typing, although speed will come with practice. You should also have excellent listening skills and grammar skills. If you're planning to work from home, it is essential to be comfortable with working alone and meeting deadlines. You must be a self-starter who can work consistently without being driven by a boss. Given the growth in health practices and hospitals and the need for standardization of records, the demand for medical transcription services is likely to keep growing. You should carefully analyze the pros and cons of this field before venturing into it. Medical transcription provides a rewarding and fulfilling career for many people and it can do the same for you too.

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