



## Article Side

What is the Role of a Medical Transcriptionist? by [Nancy Higgins](#)

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A medical transcriptionist(MT) is an allied healthcare professional responsible for converting the voice recordings of dictations given by doctors and other healthcare practitioners into text format.

The above is a simplified description of the role of a medical transcriptionist in a healthcare environment. Dig a little deeper and you will understand the significant contribution of this unassuming and seemingly ordinary occupation to the healthcare documentation discipline.

There are several layers to a medical transcriptionist's job. The most obvious and outwardly visible job of a medical transcriptionist is to listen to taped dictations and transcribe them into written reports.

But think about what's involved in transcribing these reports – making sense of incomprehensible sentences, difficult accents, mumbling and at times having entire parallel conversations while giving dictations.

Medical terminology can be learned through a medical transcriptionist training program, but no school can teach an MT ways to deal with poor speech habits of doctors and other healthcare practitioners whose voice recorded reports they are responsible for transcribing. It's something they learn on the job and not without a fair bit of difficulty.

### Volume of documentation

Every day, tons of medical procedures are performed at hospitals, offices of physicians, outpatient care centers, clinical and diagnostic laboratories, etc.

Every patient encounter is followed by a report that needs to be transcribed by a medical transcriptionist. Sometimes doctors from several specialties are involved in providing treatment to a patient, so he or she may have interdisciplinary medical reports.

Every patient can have several such reports or records, which become a part of his or her larger medical history also known as the patient's chart in medical parlance.

The medical history of a patient may also include diagnostic test results, referral letters, operative reports, discharge summaries, administrative documentation, etc. A medical transcriptionist is responsible for transcribing every piece of documentation that goes in to a patient's history or chart and becomes part of a hospital's database.

### Accuracy is important

Medical transcriptionists are not just responsible for converting voice reports into text-based medical records, but also make sure they are a 100 percent accurate.

The importance of accuracy lays in the fact that doctors keep going back to these records to treat their patients or for future reference. If the reports are not accurate, it can have serious ramifications on the course of treatment. Incorrect treatment can put the patient at risk.

To ensure 100 percent accuracy in medical reports, medical transcriptionists need to be proficient in understanding medical terminology. They should also be skilled in English language, editing and proof reading to be able to spot and fix grammatical and spelling errors.

Medical transcriptionist training programs typically incorporate courses in these topics in addition to training students in keyboarding skills, medical record types, medical ethics and legal guidelines.

### Changing role of MTs

Anyone who's even slightly aware of the medical transcription industry would probably know that the winds of change are blowing in it. The advent of digital voice technology has altered the role of medical transcriptionists.

While some believe innovations like the speech recognition software will soon make medical transcription an obsolete profession, the truth is that the technology is far from perfect right now and has serious limitations.

While it makes the process of transcription less laborious for MTs by converting spoken dictations into text format, it is not intelligent enough to produce factually and grammatically error-free reports. The result is that medical transcriptionists continue to form an important link in the healthcare documentation process. A classic example of collaboration between technology and human effort!

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Nancy is a 36-year old stay at home mom of two. She worked as a medical assistant for five years before taking a break to be with her children. Her experience as a medical assistant gave her valuable insights in to the medical billing and coding industry, which she likes to share with others through her writing. a [Medical billing and coding programs](#) often find mention in her writings. Her expertise in a [Medical billing and coding training](#) stems from her extensive research on the subject. Her other interests include gardening and baking. She stays with her husband and two daughters.

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