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HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY SUPPORTS KEY HOME BUSINESSES

Windsor, California – The expanding scope, specialization and technological advances in healthcare have created a rapidly growing multibillion dollar industry for medical transcription and medical coding services, presenting excellent opportunities for people to provide that support through their home-based businesses, according to Donna Avila-Weil, RHIT. Over 20% of medical transcriptionists are self-employed.

Now more than ever, timely, reliable, accessible, accurate healthcare information based on the medical record is needed to facilitate effective and efficient patient care, compliance with state and federal regulations, to improve quality of healthcare while reducing healthcare costs, ensuring proper third party reimbursements, proper compensation for healthcare providers, and reducing liability exposure.

Since the medical record is the principal means of communication between healthcare professionals in treating a patient, medical transcriptionists and medical coders provide valuable services essential to timely delivery of quality healthcare (see sidebars).

Medical transcriptionists and medical coders can establish home businesses that provide transcription and/or coding services to local healthcare providers, or use readily available technology to provide their services to healthcare providers anywhere in the U.S. or other countries from anywhere they choose to live. For example, Avila-Weil provides medical transcription and other services across the U.S. from her home in Hawaii where she has also just co-authored the fully revised and expanded, fifth edition of her highly-acclaimed *The Independent Medical Transcriptionist: The Comprehensive Guidebook for Career Success in a Medical Transcription Business* (by Avila-Weil & Glaccum) which is an industry standard. Last year she also co-authored *Independent Medical Coding, Second Edition: The Comprehensive Guidebook for Career Success as a Medical Coder* (by Avila-Weil & Regan).

Medical transcriptionists are medical language specialists with knowledge of anatomy, physiology, disease processes, pharmacology, laboratory medicine and the internal organization of medical reports. They use their knowledge and transcription skills, which can be acquired through various sources, such as local schools, home study courses, working with mentors and basic experience, to convert healthcare providers' dictation into hardcopy or electronic medical records. Healthcare provider dictation can be input into a voice recording system which the medical transcriptionist can securely access and type the dictation into a medical record. Technology is also developing rapidly so speech recognition dictation can perform that function. In that situation the role of the medical transcriptionist is to edit the machine-translated text before it is completed and validated.

Medical coders are specialists who review medical records and assign to each diagnosis and treatment a specific multi-digit code chosen from an extensive system of codes standardized by the healthcare industry. Accurate, conscientious medical coding is crucial to proper payment to healthcare providers by private and government insurers, and to accurate data gathering by government agencies to track diseases/illnesses.

Authors Donna Avila-Weil, RHIT, Mary Glaccum and Rhonda Regan, CCS, CCS-P, have worked extensively in health information management for decades. Avila-Weil has specialized in medical transcription, directing medical staff services, medical coding and providing extensive consulting services during her 40 year career. Glaccum has been a medical transcriptionist for 37 years; Regan has performed medical coding for 20 years.

THE MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTIONIST, Fifth Edition: The Comprehensive Guidebook for Career Success in a Medical Transcription Business (\$54.95) and *INDEPENDENT MEDICAL CODING, Second Edition: The Comprehensive Guidebook for Career Success as a Medical Coder* (\$44.95) can be purchased at traditional and Internet bookstores or from publisher Rayve Productions at www.rayvepro.com or 1-800-852-4890.

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THE INDEPENDENT MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTIONIST, 5th Edition:
The Comprehensive Guidebook for Career Success in a Medical Transcription Business
by Donna Avila-Weil, RHIT, & Mary Glaccum
528 pages, 7x9 layflat softcover, bibliography, index, appendix, glossary
ISBN 978-1-877810-04-6 LCCN 2008922034 \$54.95

INDEPENDENT MEDICAL CODING, 2nd Edition:
The Comprehensive Guidebook for Career Success as a Medical Coder
by Donna Avila-Weil, RHIT, & Rhonda Regan, CCS, CCS-P
448 pages, 7x9 layflat softcover, bibliography, index, appendix, glossary
ISBN 978-1-877810-15-2 LCCN 2006052004 \$44.95

Why are medical transcriptionists important?

Documentation is an integral and necessary part of healthcare, with content and format influenced by legislation, compensation mechanisms, and liability exposure. As a result, today's information technology challenge for healthcare providers is the integration of data, devices, networks and processes in order to deliver accurately detailed healthcare records that facilitate process improvement, reduce costs and simultaneously improve quality of care. The most fundamental reason for supporting and promoting quality documentation is to ensure continuity of care.

All healthcare providers face increasing demands to provide quality patient care as quickly as possible, documented by ever-more-thorough records. To meet these demands, reliance is placed on skilled physicians and other medical team practitioners, state-of-the-art technology, and well-trained medical transcriptionists for accurate recording of patient care and treatment.

Why are medical coders important? In layman's language, each healthcare treatment involves 1) a diagnosis of the patient's problem and 2) a treatment to try to remedy the problem. To arrive at a diagnosis, such things as lab tests, scans, and x-rays are necessary. Treatment involves hospitalization, doctor visits, prescription drugs, surgery, therapy or other options. In order to accurately pay doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, labs, ambulance companies and the myriad other healthcare providers (and to track diagnoses and treatments for national and international healthcare statistical databases), it is necessary for each element of the diagnosis and each part of the treatment to be assigned a specific multi-digit code chosen from an extensive system of codes standardized by the healthcare industry. The person selecting the code for each step is the "coder," whose accuracy, conscientiousness and ethics are crucial to proper payment by private and government insurers.

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