

The Medical Transcriptionist's Career, Including Ethical and Legal Responsibilities

INTRODUCTION

This chapter has the following:

- One assignment for setting up a personal transcriptionist's notebook.
- One review test, with the answers in this guide.
- One HIPAA test, with the answers in this guide.
- One review test, in the guide to use now or to add to other tests for a review of several chapters together.

MATERIALS

- Three-ring binder
- Your course syllabus
- Textbook
- Medical dictionary
- Small binder with A-Z guides

TEACHING FOCUS

- Career opportunities
- Legal regulations and ethics
- Completion of workbook assignments

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

1. Specify the background and importance of medical records.
2. Explain the variety of skills that a medical transcriptionist (MT) must have.
3. Identify opportunities for physically challenged transcriptionists.
4. List the certification levels the medical transcriptionist may obtain in this career.
5. Define and explain the purpose of a medical report or record.
6. Describe the importance of the emerging use of the electronic health record (EHR)
7. Identify specific Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations that affect medical transcriptionists.
8. Explain the importance of HIPAA regulations for patients.
9. Define risk management.
10. Recognize time limits imposed on document insertion into a medical record: the turnaround time (TAT).
11. Define privileged and nonprivileged information.
12. Enumerate the guidelines for release of patient information.
13. Explain the importance of subpoenas for patient records.
14. Discuss professional issues.
15. Explain the many ways the Internet may impact the MT's job performance.
16. Describe some of the responsibilities of other healthcare workers that may impact the duties and responsibilities of the MT.
17. Assemble a reference notebook.
18. Recognize the importance of continuing education.

KEY TERMS

- Risk management
- HIPAA
- Medical records and reports
- Transcription skills



- Professional behavior
- Joint Commission
- Revenue cycle
- Turn-around-time (TAT)
- Electronic Medical Record/Electronic Health Record

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- If you do a formal presentation for the class on the first meeting in which you cover your class syllabus and expected outcome of the semester and the curriculum, you may want to have the class videotaped. A videotape is helpful for students who enter late and who have missed this vital presentation and for the prospective students who inquire about the class before joining.
- When making assignments, be sure to assign the preface to all textbooks.
- Write a brief, multiple-choice test on your class syllabus. Warn the students that a test will be given. This step is helpful in getting the students to be sure to read this vital document. Some test questions could include your office hours, how tests are scored, when the semester is complete, when homework assignments are due—any item at all that you have covered in the syllabus. Tests are then self-scored and discussed, reiterating important points in your syllabus.
- At the end of this chapter, there is a multiple-choice quiz. You may give it when the chapter is complete, or you may save it and use it with the tests provided in other chapters as a midterm examination.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Discuss the introductory chapter thoroughly in class. Explain the contents of the book and what the students will accomplish. Mention which supplies will be required during the semester. Discuss the course outline for the semester and which tests will be administered. Assign the review at the end of Chapter 1 for homework. You may wish to conduct a pretest timed typing examination in class. Discuss Self-Study 1-1. All spelling words that the students look up should be entered into their personal notebooks. Review Test 1-2 may be done in class or as homework. Because state laws vary, obtain information on medical records by writing to the medical board in your state. Encourage or assign students to bring in some magazine or newspaper articles on medicolegal issues.
- Point out to students that this is the time to discover whether they are suited to this career, sitting for many hours, working alone, and perhaps listening to many different voices. It is also worthwhile to mention that the practice has an artistic side. Some documents do not have to be merely functional; for instance, in transcribing letters, the formatting, style, and punctuation are combined like a piece of art—pleasing to the eye.
- Bring in your own transcription notebook (if you have one) so that students can examine it. If you do not have one, you can ask friends whether you could borrow theirs and photocopy a letter or two of the alphabet. Put a page of the notebook on a transparency or on a PowerPoint page. Suggest to students that they compose an electronic, rather than a paper, reference book. Instructions for this are included at the end of this chapter, and you may copy the page or present it on a PowerPoint.
- Watch for job ads in the newspaper (these do not have to be current); cut out the ads and put them on the bulletin board, a PowerPoint page, or a transparency. Ask students about individual jobs and the jobs for which they think they might be in a position to apply if they were available when they complete the curriculum. Do an Internet search.
- Encourage students to visit the Association for Healthcare Integrity (AHDI) website (www.ahdionline.org)
- Obtain copies of the AHDI publications: *Plexus* and *Health Data Matrix*, and the additional journals for the Health Information Profession: *For The Record* (biweekly) subscriptions@gvpub.com.
- Encourage the students to download this free journal from the Health Professions Institute (HPI) website (www.hpisum.com): *e-Perspectives on Medical Transcription*.
- If you have an active AHDI chapter, invite students to attend meetings, workshops, or symposia. Suggest membership in the online chapter (www.AHDIonline.org).



- Provide students with the website: ADVANCEforHIM@advanceweb.com, which is an e-Newsletter for health information professionals. (800-355-1088). Let the students know that this journal covers other health professions as well as medical transcription, but usually at least one article per newsletter is relevant to transcriptionists.
- Discuss the emergence of electronic health records and how your students can make an important contribution to this up-and-coming national medical data bank. (Advance for Health Information Professionals has published many articles on this subject that you may wish to copy for your students.)
- Ask a local medical transcriptionist (MT) from a medical facility or the supervisor/owner of a transcription company to come and speak about his or her career.
- Obtain pamphlets for distribution on a career as an MT from AHDI (800-982-2182).
- Invite a member or officer from your local chapter of AHDI. To find out the name and address of the president of the chapter nearest you, call AHDI headquarters.
- Photocopy the "Learning to Transcribe" material at the end of this chapter, and give it to the students as a whole or in individual pieces as a gift from five career MTs.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Transcriptionist's notebook
- Preparation of transcription binder
- Online job search/classified section in local newspaper
- Chapter review test – answers to this test appears below. Be sure to review this in class and take advantage of the critical thinking questions as described below.

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

- This chapter has two Critical Thinking questions: items 9 and 19 from the review test. After the tests have been scored and returned (with time permitting), discuss these. The students will not know which answers have been suggested in your key, and so you can lead them into these areas if necessary. You will also get some discussion ideas when you read their answers. Remember to record important discussion points so that you can share these with future students. Additional critical thinking questions are at the end of this chapter. Ask the students to suggest a scene where they wonder about a break of confidentiality. For instance, one student suggested she would have a problem not revealing to her friend that the friend's daughter was dating a man who was HIV positive. Most stories of this sort can be countered with the question "How did you know your friend does not already know this and would be pretty upset that now you also know?" Likewise, one can be lulled into thinking a breach is just fine when someone else makes it seem so. Consider the surgeon who lamented in the staff lounge, where many members of the staff were taking a break, that she did not get the high-profile patient who was being seen by another doctor. This makes one feel they could go right home and share this with the family, friends, and neighbors.
- Tell students about an emerging and exciting career choice by relating the following story submitted by a medical scribe:
- "About two years ago, when I was still working in my home as a medical transcriptionist, one of my clients converted to electronic medical records (EMR). The doctor found it too time consuming for him to see patients and document the information in the EMR himself. It also reduced his time that he could spend interacting with the patients. So he decided to change his approach to EMR. When possible, he documented the information into the chart himself.

Otherwise, this is what happened which included me as his scribe:

- a. The doctor dictated the HPI, the exam, and assessment/plan on a digital voice file.
- b. The digital voice files were sent to me via my secure FTP.
- c. I transcribed the files in Word or WordPerfect. (Our EMR program does not allow for the use of shortcut programs, etc.)
- d. I accessed the EMR program via a Remote Desktop Connection.
- e. I copied and pasted the HPI, exam, and assessment/plan in the appropriate patient file as narratives. (Typically, data is entered into the EMR like a "tree.")
- f. The chart note was now ready for coding, etc."



ANSWERS TO 1-2: REVIEW TEST

1. Within the first 24 hours of admission to inpatient services.
2. Answers will vary but should include four of the following: medical terminology; proofreading; spelling; speed; accuracy; listening; keyboarding and/or typing; knowledge of medical, drug, and surgical terms; understanding ethical conduct in handling medical records.
3. Accuracy.
4. A medical record. (Discuss the difference between medical records and medical reports if the students did not understand this distinction. You might point out that medical records are often called charts.)
5.
 - a. Assist in diagnosis and treatment of a patient.
 - b. Aid and advance science of medicine (research).
 - c. Comply with laws and serve in support of a claim.
6. Physician, corporation, or institution (hospital).
7.
 - a. Nonprivileged information, nonconfidential.
 - b. Privileged information, confidential.
8. HIPAA.
9. The answer depends on where you are working. You would contact the quality assurance manager, your supervisor, or the risk manager or discuss it with the document author.
10. The state law supersedes.
11. All three.
12. Using a website that is not reliable or trustworthy.
13. To prove to yourself that you have truly mastered the essentials of medical transcription and want to be recognized as a professional.
14. To fulfill your contractual obligations or with the patient's written permission to do so.
15. A power of attorney that permits someone to make decisions for a patient who is incompetent to do so.
16. No, because any information about a patient's medical condition (whether good or bad) is considered privileged and is confidential. Imagine how alarmed the mother could have become receiving information in this manner. One has to hope that this transcriptionist learned the rules of confidentiality before any further breaches occurred.
17. Jobs are just work to pay bills; they seldom provide opportunity for personal growth; wages are low; and workers are rarely allowed to use their own ideas. In careers, workers use their specialized knowledge and skills; there are broad employment opportunities; management seeks input; growth and advancement opportunities are provided; and a rewarding experience is possible. (Any of these answers along with any that are also appropriate.)
18. (The answers should open the door to interesting discussions. Sometimes the answer might be as simple as "the place that will employ me right out of school.")
19. c (discussed with risk management).
20. b (with a *subpoena duces tecum*).
21. Be kind and reassuring, saying, "I wish I could help," offer to call the physician again for her, and give no hint that it may be possible for you to access her records
22. Nothing.
23. F. You are never exempt from privacy restriction in respect to the patient's PHI.
24. T. One may certainly work from home being particularly careful to protect your computer screen from view of any family members or visitors, to protect all of your documents from exposure, to unauthorized use of your work computer, or any files store therein or printed. Care must be taken to shred any papers with PHI when they are no longer needed.
25.
 - e. Files are stored in the repository in the hospital or clinic where they were dictated. They are backed up every day on a server in another location.
26. b.
27. "it didn't happen" or "you didn't do it."
28. d
29. d
30. a.



ANSWERS TO HIPAA QUIZ

1. What does PHI stand for?
c. Protected Health Information.
2. If you stumble upon a breach of PHI, whom should you notify regarding the breach?
a. Your company's compliance officer
3. When asking your family member for help in understanding a difficult dictation, the recording should not be played over the speakers. Why not?
b. No family member should have access to any voice or text file, or PHI.
4. You would like to maintain a file of sample reports for reference, you should:
a. Remove all PHI and print the report for your use.
5. You just transcribed a report on one of your neighbors who is in the hospital.
c. Refuse to transcribe the report; ask your supervisor to assign it to someone else.
6. You decide it's time to take your 30-minute lunch break. You should:
d. Exit all open programs. When you are ready to take a 30-minute lunch break or leave your work station for any stretch of time, you should definitely exit out of all applications, but also have your screen saver set so that it asks you for a password to enter the PC when you return to it. This will prevent anyone from accessing your PC while it is up and running while you are away from it.
7. When disposing of specimen cups or IV bags that include patient names, a hospital should.
d. All of these are correct. Even though this has nothing to do with medical transcription work, it does give us something to discuss.
8. Which of the items listed below is *not* considered PHI?
c. State where patient resides.
9. You are a medical transcriptionist or a QA editor and you keep a manual log of each report that you have worked on for the day in order to verify line counting. You should:
a. Shred or burn the log when you are finished with it.
10. When you are in the waiting room of a doctor's office and the nurse comes out and says your name aloud to call you into the doctor's office for your appointment, is this a violation of the Privacy Rule? No. The Privacy Rules allows communications to occur for treatment purposes. Calling out a patient's name in a waiting room is considered an incidental disclosure and is allowable.
11. When asking a question about a report via instant messaging, it is permissible to include PHI in the message.
False. Instant messaging is even more unsecure than using unsecure email.
12. According to the HIPAA Privacy Rule, there is no requirement that patients sign an authorization to obtain copies of their own records.
True
13. Can patients be given a copy of their records on CD instead of in paper format?
True as long as the patients agree to have copies of their records provided to them in an electronic version.
14. Are medical facilities required by the HIPAA Privacy Rule to notify patients of accidental disclosures of PHI?
Yes within 60 days.
15. Yes or No: You had an appointment with your family physician. This physician just happens to dictate reports to the medical transcription company that you work for, and you are one of the MTs who work on that site. You go into the system at work and open up the report to see who transcribed your report and to read the report. Is this in violation of HIPAA? Yes
16. You just transcribed a progress note on someone who is in your prayer group at church and the situation is gravely serious.
d. None of the above.
17. You would like to maintain a file of sample reports from various doctors on your account. You can legally:
a. Remove all PHI and print the report for your use.



18. You have requested e-mail feedback from your QA editor regarding some of the more challenging dictators on your account. This is appropriate if your QA editor:
 - d. All of the above.
19. You are a medical transcriptionist working for a medical transcription company. You come across a breach of PHI and should report it immediately to:
 - b. Your company's compliance officer.
20. Once the privacy officer has been notified of a privacy breach, he/she must:
 - d. All of the above.
21. You receive copies of patient schedules from your employer in order to verify correct spellings of patient names, etc. These copies should be handled in what manner:
 - c. They may be kept indefinitely as long as they are electronic and the computer is secure from access by others.



CHAPTER 1 MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

NAME _____ SCORE _____

Directions: Each of the questions or incomplete statements below is followed by suggested answers or completions. Select the single answer that is best in each case.

1. A medical administrative assistant is a professional who:
 - a. types letters to follow up insurance claims
 - b. completes workers' compensation and state disability forms
 - c. prepares letters from drafts
 - d. Both a and c
 - e. All of the above

2. An MT is a professional who:
 - a. has excellent spelling, editing, and proofreading skills
 - b. is an indispensable assistant to physicians in producing medical reports
 - c. has a thorough knowledge of medical terminology
 - d. All of the above except b
 - e. All of the above

3. The Latin term *respondeat superior* means:
 - a. The physician is liable in certain cases for the wrongful acts of his or her employees.
 - b. The physician is liable for his wrongful acts.
 - c. Let the master answer.
 - d. Both a and c are correct.
 - e. Both a and bare correct.

4. Libel refers to:
 - a. spoken statement in the presence of others that subjects a patient to ridicule
 - b. a common tort
 - c. a written statement to someone that damages the reputation of a patient
 - d. Both a and c
 - e. All of the above

5. A medical report is:
 - a. not a legal document unless it is subpoenaed
 - b. a permanent legal document formally stating the results of an investigation
 - c. considered nonprivileged information
 - d. given out to an insurance carrier at any time information is requested about a patient
 - e. not part of the medical record until it is mailed to the referring physician



CHAPTER 1 MULTIPLE-CHOICE ANSWERS

- e** 1. A medical administrative assistant is a professional who:
- a. types letters to follow up insurance claims.
 - b. completes workers' compensation and state disability forms.
 - c. prepares letters from drafts.
 - d. Both a and c.
 - e. All of the above.
- e** 2. An MT is a professional who
- a. has excellent spelling, editing, and proofreading skills.
 - b. is an indispensable assistant to physicians in producing medical reports.
 - c. has a thorough knowledge of medical terminology.
 - d. All of the above except b.
 - e. All of the above.
- d** 3. The Latin term respondeat superior means
- a. the physician is liable in certain cases for the wrongful acts of his or her employees.
 - b. the physician is liable for his wrongful acts.
 - c. let the master answer.
 - d. Both a and c.
 - e. Both a and b.
- d** 4. Libel refers to
- a. spoken statement in the presence of others that subjects a patient to ridicule.
 - b. a common tort.
 - c. a written statement to someone that damages the reputation of a patient.
 - d. Both a and c.
 - e. All of the above.
- b** 5. A medical report is
- a. not a legal document unless it is subpoenaed.
 - b. a permanent legal document formally stating the results of an investigation.
 - c. considered nonprivileged information.
 - d. given out to an insurance carrier at any time information is requested about a patient.
 - e. not part of the medical record until it is mailed to the referring physician.



HINTS FOR LEARNING TO TRANSCRIBE

Before your students begin to practice transcription, you might wish to copy the following hints and anecdotes for them. One of these hints might be just the piece of the puzzle that fits.

1. Listen all the way through a dictation, maybe several times.
2. Develop an “ear” for the dictator; listen for the same expressions being said over and over again.
3. Learn the context of the document. When you know the context, it is easier to fit the troublesome words into meaningful groups. For instance, the word groups in a history and physical examination are quite different from the word groups in an operative report. An x-ray examination does not resemble a pathology report.
4. If something does not make sense, it is probably wrong. Do not make the mistake of saying, “But that is what was dictated.” No, the dictator probably did not say that but said something that sounded similar that did make sense. Figure it out.
5. Consult the reference materials provided in the appendices.

LEARNING TO TRANSCRIBE

In the following narrations, four retired MTs and one MT who is working and teaching share their experiences in learning to transcribe before there was training for the career. They each want to extend expressions of encouragement for those just embarking on this wonderful career.

MT #1: There are probably as many ideas for learning how to transcribe dictation as there are medical transcriptionists. I have thought back to the days when I learned how to transcribe, and it is sort of scary since I was so darn feeble at it in the beginning. However, in analyzing why I was not that good, I realized that it was not because I had difficulty understanding what was being said; it was simply putting it all together, spelled and punctuated correctly, and formatted according to the document. I was lucky in that I worked for my first dictator only part time and he was excellent. He had me spoiled, but he also taught me more than I realized about quality. Every chance I got, I read his old dictation, so I could see the words. If I could not pronounce them, I looked them up in the dictionary. I observed dozens of different styles and learned a lot of different things that I never used again!

By the time I was ready to work full time at being a transcriptionist, I imagined that I was pretty good at it. However, it was like beginning all over again. This time, I had the basics down, but I was trying to understand many more voices. So, in order to write this for you, students, I am thinking about how I learned to transcribe way back then. I do want you to understand that I was not in a time crunch, so I could fiddle around with a stubborn word for as long as I wanted. If I did not get it done at work, I took the dictionary home and worked some more. I played tapes in my car and in my kitchen with new dictators' voices. I kept lists of words. I learned early on to go forward when I was stuck and to come back again and again to a problem. Sometimes I just got up and walked around, played the dictation into the room, slowed it down. I learned that many things I was having trouble with were ordinary everyday words that were slurred, attached to something else, mispronounced, and so on. I learned that the word I was searching for often sounded very much like the word that I heard that did not make sense—so I became a poet looking for rhyming words. But the key to it all was actually time and practice. You just have to be patient with yourself and believe that it will come. It will. You have the advantage of knowing medical terminology, learning the style, grammar and basics required; you have the use of computers and the Internet. These things buy you help, but they don't buy practice. Practice, practice, practice.

Marcy Diehl, CMT, AHDI-F



MT #2: It was a different culture, getting into medical transcription several years ago. There were no educational programs available, and it was OJT (on-the-job training). Here are my hints for success when first getting started:

1. I referenced a lot and wrote down the terms I found in a notebook. I purchased a little 3-ring binder with alphabetic dividers and kept a running list of all the new words. Today, I know how to use Excel, so I would create a spreadsheet so the list can be alphabetized easily. I would focus on 2 or 3 letters of the alphabet every night to review my new words.
2. I would relisten to every report once I filled in all the blanks (or had them filled in for me). The next time I heard the word or phrase I knew what it was. Ear training is so important, and this is an important step.
3. I printed copies of all the reports I transcribed and kept them in a samples file, rereading them occasionally for content.
4. I read, read, and read some more—everything medical I could get my hands on. I even spent quite a bit of money (actually, “invested” is more accurate) in old issues of JAHDI and Perspectives to be able to do the proofreading challenges.

Sharon B. Allred, CMT, AHDI-F . VP of Operations/COO, Opti-Script, Inc.

Staff Development & Special Projects MT Audit Services, LLC and Opti-Script, Inc.

MT #3: It was 45 years ago. I was hired as the Girl Friday in a one-room x-ray department where my duties included everything except reading the films and taking the pictures. There was no time during my workday to transcribe the reports, so I brought the tape home with me to transcribe the reports at night on a manual typewriter. They were then proofread and corrected by the doctor, my mentor and boss. He would mark up my reports; I would then take the fresh tape home, redo the corrected reports, and transcribe the new reports—this process to be repeated every day. It was such hard work, but with the doctor's encouragement, I kept going, and I loved it. What added to the difficulty for me was the fact that I had just arrived to America from Sweden, English being my second language; I was just newly married; and there were no books to help me. So, Marcy, tell your students that if I could do it, anyone who really truly wants to learn medical transcription can do it, especially today when there are so many resources and classes from which to learn and become part of the profession of medical transcription. All you have to do is stick to it and work really hard, never losing sight of the ultimate goal—to be the best you can be.

Anita Hill, CMT, AHDI-F

MT #4: My first MT job was at Rio Hondo Hospital in Downey, California. I was fresh out of some extension courses in physiology, and I thought I knew just about everything there was to know about the human body. I also had pretty good typing skills. So, when I read an ad for “Medical Secretary Wanted,” I naturally applied for the job. The year was 1963, and small hospitals like Rio Hondo were in the process of upgrading to conform to modern requirements.

I was hired. The following Monday I reported at 0700, as ordered. On Tuesday morning, I reported for work, ready for just about anything. Except this ...

My boss turned me over to the head nurse there, who promptly led me to their dressing room, where I was gowned, masked, and given booties for my feet. She also handed me a note pad and pencil.

“You'll be in room 3 this morning.” She said. Room 3? What? Room 3 was a surgical suite where major operations were performed. The head nurse showed me to a stool that was next to where the anesthesiologist sat. They wanted me to record the surgery as it happened! The surgeon entered and looked my way, and someone whispered in his ear about what I was doing there.

“Well,” he said. “This is a first for me.” I nearly fell off that stool while the room pealed with laughter. What he meant was that this was the first time he had the luxury of not having to write his own surgery reports. I was later to learn that a simple handwritten note of less than half a page was consistent with doctors' records.

However, the AMA [American Medical Association] was now cracking down on the requirement for detail and accuracy, not only for insurance purposes, but also for the patients' protection. Enter the medical transcriptionist.



Following the operation, I got together with the anesthesiologist, and he showed me his notes. He also advised me to look up similar cases in the Medical Records Department to assist me with surgical language. Additionally, I learned to get information from Central Supply regarding instrument and suture names. Over 40 years later, I finally retired, having learned not only surgical language and crazy three-letter abbreviations but also all about computers, fax machines, and the Internet.
Hazel Tank, CMT-R

MT #5: As with so many of us, I started this career many years ago. I started with a young, bright, first and soon to be known as one of the finest in San Diego vascular surgeons. I was the office nurse (sometimes his scrubs nurse), receptionist, bookkeeper, and, I promptly learned, to my dismay, transcriptionist. Fortunately, he was also a very patient man. This was pre-word processor days, of course. He was also a great dictator, which was a blessing. On the regular typewriter I would transcribe his dictation, he would then proof it and correct it, and I would retype it! And so, I began many long hours of repetitive work. I soon also learned "look it up" was a valuable tool. How I would have loved a word processor or even a Correcting Selectric. Eventually, I became quite proficient and, I am sure, a lot smarter. It does boil down to practice and patience. I had the basics from nursing school, which did help, but certainly not anything like the classes the students have today. Good luck you who are just starting. Take enjoyment from doing it over, looking it up, and learning as you do so!

Gladyce B. McCaw, CMT, RN. Founding President, SDC-AHDI; Past member, Board of Directors, AHDI; and past chairman, National MT Week.

Here is a fun list to put on a power point, transparency or simply ask the students to fill in for you before you reveal possible responses.

Question: What are some of the qualities you may have that will make you a successful MT?

- Loves to read
- Interest in a non-bloody aspect of medicine
- Likes solving a mystery
- Likes to use the computer
- Interested in and skilled in Internet research
- Interested in words for themselves
- Interested in the meaning of words or how they are put together
- Enjoyed medical terminology
- Fascinated by the way the human body is designed and works
- Loves details
- Is not upset by being fairly criticized
- Continues to want to learn new things
- Honors deadlines
- Appreciates the word on the screen
- Pleasure in being somehow involved in patient care
- Likes association with doctors and medicine.



A reference notebook may be compiled electronically, allowing for easier alphabetization and search. If available, an Excel format would be helpful with a column for the word and a column for the meaning. **If you are a new Excel user, see additional notes below.** For example:

TERM	MEANING	CATEGORY	NOTES
abdominopelvic	combo term for abdominal and pelvic	OB/GYN	
adenofibroma	tumor of connective tissue	OB/GYN	Dr. Carter mispronounces
adnexa	appendages of an organ	OB/GYN	
appendiceal	adjective form of appendix	OB/GYN	
axilla	armpit (plural axillae)		

If the Excel application is not available, the columns could be created in Word with sort capability as well. Terms could be sorted alphabetically or by category. An important feature is the use of CTRL + F to find specific terms. For example, when the reference notebook is several pages long, a simple CTRL + F would allow the user to find "Dr. Carter" at any spot in the spreadsheet. Additionally, the spreadsheet could be left open during transcription for ease of access and reference.

Typing the newly found term also reinforces spelling as it is typed, thus enhancing memory for when the term is dictated.

EXPANDED INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING EXCEL:

Microsoft Excel allows you to create professional spreadsheets and charts with the ability to perform numerous functions and formulas to assist you in your projects. It is a good idea to use the Help Files that come with Microsoft Excel or go to Microsoft's web site located at <http://microsoft.com/office/excel/default.htm> for further assistance.

Each of the "blocks" in an Excel document is called a cell, and cells make up rows (horizontal) and columns (vertical). Borders of cells can be expanded to accommodate longer words by dragging the border with the mouse to the desired width.

Movement between cells is accomplished by use of the 4 directional arrow keys, and words can be typed in the desired cell.

Once words are added in columns (see example above), those words can be sorted alphabetically by use of the data menu option and the sort utility.

The ability to continue to sort new words and terms alphabetically as well as reference electronically by use of the CTRL + F (Find) feature, makes use of an electronic reference practical and productive.

