



Capturing America's Healthcare Story

Dictation Best Practices

A Guide for Physicians

Presented by

***The Association of Healthcare
Documentation Integrity***



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Why Best Practices in Dictation?

Quality documentation is an essential component of ongoing clinical decision-making and coordination of care.



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Quality Dictation

- **Improves communication among caregivers.**
- **Promotes patient safety.**
- **Reduces turnaround time from dictation to availability**
- **Ensures an uncompromised legal document.**
- **Reduces costs associated with error and documentation delay.**

Poor Dictation

- **Leads to errors in documentation.**
- **Puts patient and coordinated care at risk.**
- **Compromises reimbursement.**
- **Impacts coordination of care and timely decision-making**

Problematic Dictation

- **Rapid speech**
- **Poor articulation**
- **Insufficient volume**
- **Background noise**
- **Incorrect or insufficient patient information**
- **Erroneous demographics**



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Organization

- **Gather all patient encounter information and organize data before dictating.**
- **Dictate in an organized, chronological order.**
- **Follow established documentation templates and standardized formats.**

Equipment

- **Refer to tip sheets for proper use of dictation equipment.**
- **Follow facility guidelines for accessing and entering digital information.**
- **Use correct hand-held settings or telephone keypad functions to avoid clipped words.**

Demographics

- **Key identifying information when prompted.**
- **State and spell the patient's name.**
- **Include at least one other patient identifier (i.e., birth date, MRN or account number).**
- **State the date of service.**

Helpful Hints

- **Avoid eating, chewing gum, etc.**
- **Physically pause while yawning, coughing or sneezing.**
- **Pause recording to engage in other conversations.**
- **Avoid cell phones due to unreliable signal strength; also not HIPAA compliant.**
- **Avoid extraneous background noise – ie, busy nurse's stations, TVs, music, etc.**

Key Syllables

- **Recognize and clarify words and letters that can sound the same when dictated:**
 - **“No history” vs. “known history”**
 - **Abduction vs. Adduction**
 - **Hypo vs hyper**
 - **BMP vs. BNP**
 - **CNS vs. C&S**

Abbreviations

- **Clarify uncommon abbreviations.**
- **Expand abbreviations for which more than one definition may exist to avoid misinterpretation.**
- **Avoid dangerous abbreviations; utilize abbreviations from facility's approved list.**

Numbers

- Dictate critical values clearly and succinctly.
- Differentiate numbers that may sound the same when dictated (50 vs. 15, 60 vs. 16).
- Include units of measure where necessary and appropriate.
- Dictate vital sign and lab test designations so numbers do not stand ambiguously alone.



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Feedback

- ✓ **Provide feedback and direction to medical records personnel and/or transcription staff to improve data capture and avoid repeated errors.**



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The Bottom Line

- ✓ **High-quality documentation outcomes start with high-quality dictation that ensures accurate capture, timely turn-around, and maximized reimbursement.**



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Contact

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