



The Scribe

Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity - Washington
Volume 1, Issue 4

December 2008

Welcome to the Winter Issue

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Janice Niemi

Can you believe it is really fall and that winter is fast approaching? Not I! I'm still trying to recover from the fact that October is gone, and we just celebrated Thanksgiving. As I look back on what has happened in the last 11 months, I'm happy to say we have had a lot to be thankful for. The association has had two very successful symposiums this past year, and we have seen a marginal increase in participation by members within the State. However, it has not all been joyful. Our two local chapters within the State have faced some tough times and are working on turning those around. I encourage you to become more active within your local chapter and also at the State level. With more and more hospitals and services moving toward the Electronic Health Record and speech recognition, there is no better place to turn than your professional association for answers and knowing that you are not alone. Your association is also the place to turn to for updates on what is happening within the industry at the legislative level.

Inside this addition is a wonderful little piece by Brenda Hurley, Delegate to Florida. I encourage you to read this as it expresses what so many of us are seeing in this industry as well as nationwide. Pat Stettler, President of GPSC, has also given us a few things to mull over regarding hope in the coming year.

As you can see by the Treasury Report, holding symposia and covering the costs to send the delegate and alternate(s) to the Annual Convention and Expo have become very costly for the State. We will be looking into other ways to raise funds along with looking at cost-saving measures for each of our symposia. As a part of this, we have included a Survey Form in the newsletter for you to fill out and send back. We would **greatly appreciate your feedback**.

In September, Patricia James, resigned as Washington's Delegate and a call was put out for a someone to fill in the remainder of her term for 2009. Carrie McComb has graciously stepped up and volunteered to run for this position. Hopefully you will be seeing a ballot coming your way very soon!

In other changes to the board, Sue Krajewski accepted a position with AHDI as a staff member. As such, she was unable to fulfill her duties as Vice President. Nominated to the position and approved by the Board of Directors was Stephanie Clemens. She will continue on as newsletter editor also. Corinna Frenzl will be leaving us as her one-year term as Student Alliance Board Partner has been completed. So, please join me in welcoming Carol Freedman to the position for the year 2009. If you are a student, please be sure to contact her if you have any questions.

Hope you enjoy this issue of your newsletter!

TREASURY REPORT

Note: Negative numbers are actually incoming funds in the outflow section, and positive numbers are outgoing funds. The overall total at the bottom of the sheet is the overall expenditures for the year.

11/30/2008

Cash Flow - YTD 1/1/2008 through 11/30/2008

Page 1

Category Description	1/1/2008- 11/30/2008
INFLOWS	
Uncategorized	0.00
TOTAL INFLOWS	0.00
OUTFLOWS	
AHDJ-WA	
Advocacy	832.14
Annual Convention	
raffle	-325.00
Registration	-3,600.00
vendor registration fee	-1,111.00
Other AHDJ-WA:Annual Convention	5,714.27
TOTAL Annual Convention	678.27
Bank Charges	25.00
Board Expense	
Food	111.54
Lodging	408.00
Other AHDJ-WA:Board Expense	1,902.50
TOTAL Board Expense	2,422.04
Business expenses,	
Paper	20.00
Postage	131.20
Other AHDJ-WA:Business expenses,	1,999.94
TOTAL Business expenses,	2,151.14
Kitsap - Spring Symposium	
Advertising Income	-150.00
Book Sales	-209.87
Raffle	-315.50
Registration Fees	-2,425.00
Sponsorship	-100.00
Vendors Registration Fee	-930.00
Other AHDJ-WA:Kitsap - Spring Symposi...	3,567.37
TOTAL Kitsap - Spring Symposium	-563.00
Meet & Greet	72.55
Pin Sales	-276.00
Technology	134.95
Other AHDJ-WA	-180.63
TOTAL AHDJ-WA	5,296.46
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	5,296.46
OVERALL TOTAL	-5,296.46





THE STUDENT SCENE

By Corinna Frenzl

Dear friends and colleagues,

It has certainly been a fast year for me, and I can't believe that this year and my term as your AHDI-WA Student Alliance Board Partner is already ending. Throughout the year, I have had the pleasure of talking to many of you prospective students, students, and postgraduates, who like me have decided to take this leap of faith into this exciting career of medical transcription. Throughout the year many of you have come to learn my mantra for success, "networking, networking and networking", and I hope that many of you have taken that to heart and attended meetings and met new friends and fellow MTs who can help guide you on our path.

Looking back on the year, we've been to 2 symposiums and held our first career fair here in Washington. We've been helping lobby our legislators for more recognition of our industry, and many of you have become credentialed as Registered Medical Transcriptionists. There have been many challenges along the way, from doing the book work in our respective education programs, to "training our ears" in our practice dictations, to learning about the current issues of our industry such as the EHR and speech recognition. We've also seen new advances from the Third Edition of the Book of Style to the exciting new web-access resource, Benchmark KB.



In this New Year, I wish you all continued success both in school and your transition to postgraduate and to professional MT. I also am pleased to join many of my mentors and new found friends on the other side as I myself graduate from my own program. It's been a great year, and for those students still in school, I wish you all best in your own studies and I am rooting for you to also join me on the other side soon.

Happy holidays to everyone and have a successful and fruitful 2009 full of networking, networking and networking.

Corinna Frenzl
2008 AHDI Student Alliance Co-Chair
2008 AHDI-WA Student Alliance Board Partner

An Introduction

By Carol Freedman

Hello everyone,

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I introduce myself to you. I am a fairly new student in medical transcription but I am honored to be the new 2009 AHDI-WA Student Alliance Board Partner

I immediately joined ADHI and AHDI-WA upon signing up for my chosen online school. I received a message from Corinna Frenzl about volunteering in the organization. Without hesitation, I said yes. Corinna and I met last week and she explained the position to me. She is a delightful person and I know she served you well.

I had considered MT years ago but other things got in the way for me. Now I am ready to complete this journey and looking forward to meeting you in person, by email, or on the phone.

My life experiences have shown me the importance of "networking, networking, networking" and so I will continue carrying that mantra forward in 2009. It is so beneficial in all areas of life.



An Introduction continued....

I have 3 grown children, 4 grandchildren, and have been married to the same man for 48 years now. I have been “around the block” so to speak. I am retired from a major airline. I am daycare for my grandchildren. I am co-leader of the TN support group here in Seattle. Yes, TN is the abbreviation for trigeminal neuralgia (the suicide disease) so I have had experience reaching out to people who are looking for help and encouragement.

I extend good wishes for the holiday season and the year ahead.

See you all on the trail!!

Carol Freedman
2009 AHDI-WA Student Alliance Board Partner



Historic Change

By: Brenda J. Hurley, CMT, AHDI-F
Florida Delegate

This is the morning after our national election and with the results now confirmed, no matter your political affiliation, we have all clearly witnessed historic change for our country. Whether your candidate won or lost, we all now must join together to contribute to the much-needed work that must be done for the success of our country.

I cannot help but consider how much historic change we have already witnessed within our own profession. For me, I have been in medical transcription for nearly 40 years, I have seen us go from the windowless basements in hospitals with only 1 or 2 old references and using equipment (typewriters) that was often handed down from other departments. Our job titles changed as well from the girls in the typing pool, typists, medical secretaries, transcribers, to medical transcriptionists. Few people knew who we were within the institutions where we worked and fewer knew that we even existed as reports just miraculously appeared on patient charts as if done by the stroke of magic.

Today, through change, things are different as we often work from our home offices using computers with Windows, we have enormous references available to us including the Internet, and our titles are continuing to evolve as some of our roles also evolve from medical transcriptionists to editors, to trainers, to educators, to consultants, to speech recognition editors, to documentation specialists, to perhaps even some yet determined as our profession continues to evolve and change.

With nearly 4 decades of tremendous change in our profession, there are still some things that have not changed all that much – dictators dictate, we analyze and interpret the dictation to transform it from speech to text, whether on paper or electronically, whether the complete report or only portions of the report, whether through a platform for report creation or through a web portal directly inputting within an electronic health record, we have adapted and continue to change as our role in healthcare documentation evolves.

Our association that represents this noble profession has also evolved to reflect these changes. We are no longer singularly defined as medical transcriptionists as some of us now work in areas that reflect the evolving roles within medical transcription but rather our single focus remains the integrity of the healthcare documentation – created through traditional transcription or through the use of other technologies (i.e., speech recognition, electronic templates, etc.).



Historic Change continued.....

Our association has not abandoned medical transcriptionists, it is leading us to prepare for the change that is coming (and where it has already arrived) as the technology that impacts us continues to evolve. Our roots in traditional medical transcription are essential to our ability to transition our skills to making this change, and the association is doing all it can (with limited resources) to give us educational opportunities to prepare us with new skills for new roles in healthcare documentation.

I truly understand the frustration that many medical transcriptionists feel about the profession. Just as so many things have changed over the last 40 years for our profession, some things have not changed nearly enough. We have been undervalued far too long for the importance of our role and contribution we make to quality healthcare documentation. We have not controlled the domain of medical transcription and report creation through the dictation process as others continue to set cumbersome rules or make decisions that negatively impact the ability for us to do our work efficiently and effectively. We continue to be squeezed economically to do more for less as our national healthcare costs escalates and patient safety diminishes.

So how do you propose we make change? Some have suggested that they will leave their careers to go to other jobs. Some have stayed on but have chosen instead to be bitter and complain to anyone willing to listen about the injustices they are subjected to in this field of medical transcription. In the words of Dr. Phil, “How is that working for you?”

Leaving a profession that you love, staying bitter and angry only to complain to anyone or everyone who tries to make a change – does that really work for you, does that really work for the greater good of our profession? Those are questions only you can answer.

Have we not seen in this recent historic election that people can and indeed do have the ability to evoke change! There has never been a better time to join together to speak out in a collective voice that change is needed. That collective voice is through the Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDI), the organization that advocates for all of us! Just imagine the change we could impact if our membership was 30,000 or more, instead of 7,000. Our association represents our interests in standards-development organizations, with our legislators, the U.S. Department of Labor, through alliances with our organizations (i.e. AHIMA, MTIA, HCCA, etc.), and in numerous other places – giving us a mechanism and a voice for change in the evolving world of healthcare documentation.

Ask yourself, if AHDI wasn't there for us, who would be? If AHDI was not representing us within these entities, who would be?

If you think that your single membership does not matter – it does. Just as individuals contributed to change in this historic election through their financial contributions, through their volunteering to work for change and by coming together they were rewarded with success.

I cannot guarantee you that with your membership it will make all of our plans and goals successful, but without you and your contribution to our association, I can guarantee that it will be more difficult to achieve our success.

During this historic election we have witnessed that when people come together they can make change; clearly that message is the same for all of us who have shared in the career of medical transcription, it is time to come together to make change.

Join AHDI, join your local chapter, if you live in an area that has no local component association then join the Online Association. Join me and other committed volunteers by getting involved, if only for an hour a month or more, we need all contributions, as collectively we can make history!




Delegate Corner Notations

In June, the HOD formed the Sustainable Structure Task Force. The task force has been working hard looking at different options for restructuring of the association not only at a national level but at the State and local level. In October, the SSTF submitted three resolutions to the House of Delegates, which are listed below.

On November 12, the House of Delegates held their fourth quarter meeting online. During that meeting four resolutions were passed and forwarded to the Bylaws Committee for inclusion in the Bylaws.

1. It was voted that an educational chapter shall have the right to limit officer candidates to students and/or postgraduate members.
2. From the SSTF, it was suggested that state/regional associations be given "guardianship" over the local chapters within their geographic boundaries. This would provide local chapters with support and guidance from the state/regional in regards to compliance requirements, membership and leadership. This will hopefully help to strengthen the bond between state/regional and local chapter(s) for success.
3. It was submitted by the SSTF that be it resolved that the delegate will be a voting member of the state/regional/web-based association's board of directors and executive board/committee. As there has been significantly more asked of a delegate regarding areas of communication and accountability, it was felt the delegate should not only have a voice but a vote on the board. As a side note, I am happy to report that this was changed in the state association in 2007 and became effective January 1 of this year.
4. The final resolution submitted by the SSTF was that it be resolved that components be required to support a minimum of one AHDI initiative. It was the feeling of the SSTF that each component should assist in moving forward with the goals of the association by choosing one initiative to support and promote.



CHRISTMAS MUSINGS

By Pat Stettler, CMT, AHDI-F
GPSC President

Every Christmas I buy one new ornament for my Christmas tree. It's always fun to go back and see how my tastes have changed. I still love the tarnished three-dimensional star that bears the oldest date of 1979. But whatever possessed me to buy the huge [OK, and it's ugly too] snowman that used to play 'Jingle Bells,' I'll never remember. But I think the reason I bought this year's ornament will stay with me.

It's quite pretty. It's made of different colors of glass. It spells out the word 'HOPE.'

I spotted it at the Evergreen Hospital Gift Shop after a doctor's appointment shortly after the newspaper headlines started shouting more and more loudly what a mess we are in economically. I thought, 'Hum, maybe there is hope for things to turn around.' I bought the ornament, hoping I'd be able to put up a Christmas tree this year.

They've been renovating my condo on the outside since July, and consequently everything from outside has had to come inside. My bathtub is brimming with everything that is usually stored in my outdoor storage closet. And my freezer is adorning the spot in my living room where the Christmas tree usually goes. Before the Christmas tree can go up, the freezer has to go out.



Christmas Musings continued

I thought about putting the tree in my office, but my oldest granddaughter crossed her eyes when I mentioned doing that and said, 'Grandma, we don't celebrate Christmas in your office, we celebrate it in your living room.' Of course this is the child [now twelve] who at the age of four decided we had to have the 'traditional Christmas lasagna' every year. I'm not sure how her mind is wired, but the creativity gives me hope for the next generation who will soon be running our country!

Putting aside hopes about my Christmas tree, I realize that I'm hoping our GPSC Christmas social on December 6th will be a success. We have decided to sponsor a military family for Christmas this year, and I'm hoping everyone will be willing to pitch in to brighten that family's holiday season.

When I flipped the calendar to December today, I realized that a new year will soon be upon us. I hope that during that year GPSC can hang together and hopefully grow back to its former glory of 80 members. We started at nine last January, and now we're sitting in the twenties, so we are headed in the right direction at least. We're going to have a student day in January, because students are the future hope of our profession. In April we'll be reinstating our spring symposium with a technology-based theme, including a demonstration of the Benchmark Knowledge Base – an all-in-one reference tool made especially for MTs. We're also hoping to look seriously at the restructuring proposals that are being discussed on the national level, tour a hospital's electronic medical record department, participate in Advocacy Day, and maybe meet at a Senior Center next holiday season and sing Christmas carols and bring fresh-baked goodies for the residents. I'm hoping we can even plan a fun family social event sometime in the summer.

But most of all, I'm hoping that some of these activities will rekindle interest in membership in GPSC and AHDI-WA and AHDI. I suspect that many MTs are feeling disenfranchised, under-appreciated, and just downright scared at the changes that are occurring in the industry with the electronic health record and speech recognition. Perhaps that is why interest and attendance is down. Yet, to me, that seems to be an oxymoron. When things are uncertain, when things are changing, when things are tough, that's when we need each other the most.

I've always felt that MTs are a special breed who love and are passionate about their profession. That love and passion creates a special bond that always creates a wonderful sense of camaraderie when we come together, whether it is for a serious meeting or a fun social event [such as the part where we steal gifts from each other at the Christmas social].

Perhaps I need to bring my Christmas 'HOPE' ornament, or at least its spirit to the meetings next year. What do you think?

For now, I'm hoping I get my Christmas tree up with that ornament on proud display. [Then I can hope to get it down before spring break!!] I'm hoping to see more of you at our monthly meetings in 2009. And finally, I'm hoping you all have the happiest holidays ever!!



UPCOMING EVENTS

December 6, 2008 -- GPSC-AHDI Christmas Party

February 7, 2009 -- Northwest Council of Presidents Leadership Conference, The Inn at Gig Harbor, Gig Harbor, Washington (see enclosed registration form)

January 17, 2009 -- GPSC-AHDI Monthly Meeting and Student Day



GOT CREDENTIALS?

Why Not?

A growing number of companies in the US are recognizing the link between certified professionals and quality documentation outcomes. Many are now seeking, reimbursing, and compensating the credential in the marketplace. Advance Magazine's 2007 Salary Survey showed that *"The number of certified medical transcriptionists (CMTs) rose about 1 percent from last year, and the pay for CMTs grew from \$31,949 last year to a \$37,864 in 2007."*¹



Registered Medical Transcriptionist (RMT)

The Registered Medical Transcriptionist credential was developed to assure consumers and employers that successful candidates are qualified to practice medical transcription. It is based on the skills and knowledge described in the [AHDJ Model Job Description](#) Level 1 MT and the competencies outlined in the AHDJ Model Curriculum. This credential is ideal for recent graduates of transcription training programs and practitioners with limited work experience.



Certified Medical Transcriptionist (CMT)

Certified Medical Transcriptionists have demonstrated the knowledge and skill set of a Level 2 MT as described in the AHDJ Model Job Description. Possession of the CMT credential confirms the commitment to lifelong learning and professional development. Successful CMT candidates have a minimum of 2 years of acute care transcription experience.

What Your Colleagues Are Saying

The process of preparing for and taking the RMT test greatly increased my confidence and reinforced all that I had learned during my medical transcription course, making me feel ready to enter the work force. I had no trouble passing the pre-employment test with the company I am now working for as a full-time MT.

Mary McLaughlin, RMT since 2007

Obtaining the CMT certification proved to be a valuable stepping stone in my career. I received a promotion shortly afterwards. As we centralized our pool of transcriptionist I felt the CMT credential aided in my credibility as a supervisor. I went on to obtain a Bachelors in Nursing and currently teach transcription at a community college as well.

Cheryl Klopocic, CMT since 1999

Striving for something that seems unreachable is a great challenge - accomplishing it is a great reward!

Debbie Bright-Chunn, BS, RHIT, CMT since 2003

I took the CMT exam for personal gratification and a sense of accomplishment. My employer does give a 2% bonus for being certified but that was not a huge motivation in itself, just an added bonus.


Sandi Ash, CMT since 2003

How to Get Started

AHDJ-WA is recruiting participants for a credentialing study group. Interested parties should check the AHDJ-WA website for information about how to join. If you would prefer to "go it alone," you can download a study guide and recommended curriculum from the AHDJ website at www.ahdionline.org, click on "Get Credentialed" and then "Credentialing Cup." You may also choose to attend one of the free monthly "Steps to Credentialing" webinars offered by AHDJ.

Make a New Year's Resolution to get credentialed! You deserve it!

1. Jusinski, Lynn. "2007 Salary Survey Results: How Does Your Salary Measure Up?" *Advance for HIM*.
<<http://health-information.advanceweb.com/Editorial/Content/editorial.aspx?CC=105027&CP=1>>.



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What Changes Can You Help Make?

MEMBER SURVEY ATTACHED, BE SURE TO FILL OUT
AND RETURN --- THANK YOU!