



The Scribe

Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity - Washington
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Welcome to the Summer Issue

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PRESIDENT'S WELCOME *Janice Niemi*

Welcome to the second edition of *The Scribe*. Is summer really almost here? It is so hard to believe as I look outside at the cool chilly weather still encompassing us.

Recently Patricia James (PJ), Delegate for Washington, attended the AHDI Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC. She has submitted a wonderful article on all that was accomplished not only for Washington but across the nation. Also included from the Advocacy Summit is an article written by Trudi Griffith, an AHDI Board of Director. For both, it was their first time attending and their accounts of what was accomplished are very encouraging indeed as we work our way toward further recognition of MT's across all boundaries.

As a reminder, I would like to encourage everyone to attend the upcoming first ever Career Expo sponsored by Greater Puget Sound Chapter. It should be a wonderful experience for all who attend and is free! And do not forget about the Annual Convention in September on the 27th and 28th. This year it is to be held in Vancouver, Washington at The Red Lion at the Quay. Registration form is included in this issue and will be available on the website shortly.

For a little fun this time we added a word search for you. Hopefully you do not get too dizzy with all the "Z's". ☺

Be sure to check out the new website also at www.ahdi-wa.org. Once again our Webmaster has outdone herself!

Hope you enjoy this issue of your newsletter!

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The Scribe

STUDENT ALLIANCE NEWS

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Networking as a Student

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In the last issue, I had written about "tips and ideas" about how to get your foot in the door once you graduate. Continuing to hear frustration from students, in this issue, I will further elaborate on my second tip, NETWORKING! Networking is a critical tool you should utilize while you are a student. Taking the extra time and effort to network while in school will help you be more marketable when it comes time to apply for that first job.

By networking with professional MTs, you will learn firsthand experience about what to expect in the working world. Each company is different. They all have different methods of obtaining dictations from doctors and the different systems they use. Some companies require you to log into a system and transcribe reports on that system, others will send you voice files via email and have you transcribe in a Word document. By networking you can find out the different systems that local MTs are using and the pros and cons of each one. When it comes time for your job search, it will enable you to ask direct questions to your future employer during the interview and help you decide what method works best for you.

Our industry is changing rapidly with new technology, such as speech recognition and the electronic health record. As students, we must be aware that traditional transcription will no longer be the only means by which reports are transferred into the patient's file. Finding out about how companies are transitioning to new technologies should be an important factor in your job search. How are companies calculating for production for traditional transcription versus editing? Getting feedback from professional MTs on their experience with the transition will help you be more aware of these changes and will help you be better prepared.

In my two years as a member of AHDI, I am amazed at how many experienced MTs not only do their jobs, but are active in participating and volunteering at the local, state and national levels. These women and men have amassed a great wealth of knowledge and experience that you, as a student, can tap into. Find out about their background: their experience as an independent contractor, as an employee of a national company, working from home versus in-house. What are their favorite resources to use? Ask top producers what they do to increase their line counts? Everything you learn as a student will give you more insight into how to succeed in this field.

Now that you understand the benefits of networking, I briefly want to give you additional tips on how to be a better networker. First and foremost – get out there and meet people! Find out if your area has a local chapter. The Greater Puget Sound Chapter (GPSC) is sponsoring the First Annual MT Career Expo on June 21st from 10-4 at Everett Community College. Save the date for the AHDI-WA Annual Convention "Journey Through Medicine" on September 27-28th in Vancouver. Plus, if you can make it, I would also encourage you to attend the Annual Convention and Expo in Orlando Florida, August 6-9th. There are tons of opportunities to meet other MTs. This is not a time to be shy – introduce yourself, ask questions, volunteer!

As a student, start marketing yourself! You don't need to wait until you graduate. Whenever you are out and about – have business cards handy. It is now easy to make business cards at home on your computer. There are even free programs at www.avery.com that help you produce professional looking business cards. Hand them out. Let people know when you expect to graduate. Show them your enthusiasm and your dedication to your new career. By building these relationships now, it may help provide you with connections to succeed in finding that first job.

Doing well in school and earning your certificate of completion is only the first step in helping you succeed in this career. Like the old quote, "it's not what you know, but who you know that makes the difference." I can't stress it enough, network, network, network! Be bold and step above the crowd!



Z-MEDICAL WORD PUZZLE

N M I B Z O O A A E Z Z Z Z D
S I S Y H P O P A G Y Z I O S
N E N I T U L F F A O O Z N O
N Z O O N O S I S O U N O O N
Z O O G R A F T I N G U O S Z
O Z I M B I I S M G Y L W K L
O I E N I D A R B E T A Z E A
P G E O S I N M T S T O I L T
H Z W I S C H E N S T U F E E
I A A G S M O I Z E A N I T P
L G O Y N F B I Y A G O Z O I
I O E Z T N N B Z F Z O R N N
C N T T S C M G Z A N A M O O
R A L A M O C I T A M O G Y Z
I Z Z O S O I Z E N Z S A S Z

zigbi	zatebradine	zymogen
zoonosis	zonae	zygion
zygapophysis	zonoskeleton	zygomaticomalar
zigzag	zinc	zoografting
zonula	zooafflutinen	zoroastrianism
zwischenstufe	zonipetal	zazen
zimbiism	zoophilic	



GPSC Medical Transcription Career Expo
June 21, 2008 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Everett Community College Student Union

Get ready . . . Get set. . . Get excited! You are invited to participate in a groundbreaking event!

Be sure to mark your calendar for June 21st and set aside an hour or two between 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to join your medical transcription colleagues at the first-ever Medical Transcription Career Expo, sponsored by the Greater Puget Sound Chapter of AHDI, at Everett Community College in the student union. This is the first ever medical transcription event of its kind, and best of all, it is free!!

Whether you are an experienced transcriptionist, recent graduate, student, or are just interested in learning more about the profession, this event is for you. Exhibits will include employment opportunities, educational opportunities for all levels of medical transcription skills, information on starting your own business, or building the one you already have, Stedman's wordbooks and resources, The Book of Style (3rd edition – available on site), the latest technologies to help you be more productive, transcription supplies including digital recorders and software, liability insurance, medical identity theft, personal finance, and much more!

Additional information available through the GPSC website at <http://www.gpsc-aamt.org/html/MTCE.html>

See you there!

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 21, 2008 -- GPSC-sponsored Medical Transcription Career Expo, Everett, WA

August 5-9, 2008 -- AHDI Annual Conference and Exposition, Orlando, Florida

September 27 and 28, 2008 -- AHDI-WA Annual Convention, Vancouver, WA; Red Lion Inn at The Quay

October 31 and November 1, 2008 -- AHDI-Oregon "Sand and Savvy" Symposium; Halloween Party Friday evening and educational sessions Saturday. Hallmark Inn located in Newport, OR



2008 Advocacy Summit
Washington, DC

Patricia "PJ" James, CMT
2008-2009 AHDI-WA Delegate

For those who haven't heard, the Advocacy Summit is an annual event where the Delegates, AHDI Board and staff come to Washington, DC, to advocate for our profession. This year, we focused on informing our representatives about our profession, the EHR (electronic health record), the importance of accurate and timely availability of PHI to healthcare providers, programs such as the Military Spouse Initiative and our NexGen campaign. For those interested in more information on these programs, please refer to ahdionline.org.

Weeks before the event, we were contacting our legislators in the attempt to make appointments with their staff during our trip. We stayed in nearby Rockville, Maryland, and were able to travel from there on the Metro to DC for our appointments. I was able to make appointments with staffers from Senator Murray's office and my representative, Congressman Inslee. Although I worked hard, I was unable to connect with Congressman Cantwell's staff for a formal appointment.

After an orientation for those new to this process (including me), we set out for DC on the Metro. We teamed up to help each other in our meetings. This worked very well, as my teammate Tracy Brown from Maryland, helped keep me on track in the meetings.

We were surprised and awed that our efforts were so well received. It turns out that the EHR is a subject before our representatives right now. I was told more than once, "You are in the right place at the right time with the right information." Legislative staffers are kept extremely busy and often do not have time to collect such information themselves, so they often depend on organizations like ours to provide them with the statistics and information they need.

Indeed, in my meeting with Congressman Inlees' aide, he was repeatedly called away to the phone to answer questions for the Congressman on another issue just before he was scheduled to speak on it before the House. We had plenty of time and were able to give the Congressman's aide all the time he needed. In this way, we were able to cover all the subjects we had laid out in advance, and the Congressman's aid was very receptive.

I was surprised to find both staffers I met with not only were interested in what we had to say but asking very pertinent questions. They both asked me to explain exactly what the EHR is. After all our preparation, I was able to do so very quickly. This worked well to lead into the other issues we wanted to cover, and we found the staffers give us the time to cover all information that we had planned.

Further, I was able to impress upon these staffers that our profession is a perfect match for our military spouses. We are in need of 30,000 trained competent MTs in this country, and that as healthcare documentation professionals, we are the only ones in Washington State not required to hold credentials either by mandate or employer preference.

After explaining some of the predatory practices of some MT proprietary schools, and the need for AHDI approved schools to be available for our military spouse program, they became very interested in this issue. I explained that Title IV (federal regulation of online schools) has made it difficult for our military spouses to attend approved online schools, yet Title IV does nothing to contribute to their function for our program.

Toward the end of my meeting with Senator Murray's staffer, Brenda Hurley came in to meet up with us. She had just come from her meeting with Congressman Finney (Florida). He had pledged to introduce legislation in the House to include our Military Spouse Initiative approved online schools from Title IV. This was great news.



Delegate 2008 Advocacy Summit continued.....

Imagine my surprise when Senator Murray's staffer said, "I am sure Senator Murray would be interested in introducing the Senate version of that bill." WOW! I hope I have explained this to you well enough to help you understand how surprised and pleased we were that we were able to make such great progress.

As we trickled back to the hotel, more success stories unfolded. Members of Congress, House and Senate are listening to us and pledging to work with us on legislation. Many of our Delegates had their representatives walk into their meetings with staffers and ask their questions. It really felt like we were able to accomplish a great deal.

We owe a lot of this to the fact that the EHR has been laid before those "on the Hill" and the happy accident that we arrived in time to offer them real information on this issue, as well as other issues that concern us as members of AHDI.

After all the good news, I pulled myself together and set out the next day on my own to drop off our packet of information at Senator Cantwell's office. Her reception staffer was kind enough to provide me with the business cards for those whom I might contact regarding our issues (since I was unable to get a formal appointment).

I have e-mailed all of these staffers with further offers of information and help on the issues we discussed. I will be contacting Senator Cantwell's local office to see if I can arrange to meeting with someone on this end to explain our concerns.

If you wish to participate by writing your representatives in Congress and want to know more, please contact me through the link on the AHDI-WA website, www.ahdi-wa.org. I would be happy to personally deliver your letters to the local offices of your representatives to help impress them with the importance of your concerns.


If you have any questions or concerns on these or any other issues concerning AHDI, AHDI-WA or local components, I would welcome your input and hope you will contact me through the AHDI-WA website.

We are getting ready to launch our efforts to contact and inform the local Kitsap County military bases about the Military Spouse Initiative. If any of you are interested in spending a little time in aiding our efforts, please feel free to contact me through my link on the AHDI-WA website.

If you have family or friends who are military spouses, please feel to have them contact me directly. You may also refer them to ahdionline.org for the information available there. We are ready to roll out our efforts on this issue locally in Kitsap and will welcome any assistance in contacting military spouses with the information.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Military Spouse Initiative in other areas of Washington State, please feel free to contact me and I can refer you to the coordinators of those efforts.





Trudi Griffith recently gave us permission to reprint her e-mail regarding her recent Advocacy Summit experience. This was her first time attending and her summary is an excellent example of what can be accomplished and what fun can be had by attending. I hope you enjoy as much as I did.----Janice Niemi, President

Advocacy Summit Experience

This year was my first experience with Advocacy Day and I will be honest when I say that there was some anxiety initially. I had no previous experience to draw from, didn't know what to expect, or how I would be received. So, I scrounged up the courage to proceed forward and hoped for the best. Monica Haddox and I began calling our state representatives and senators and making appointments. I was rather surprised to find how easy it was and how well received we were. All requests were granted.

Once this hurdle was crossed, I then had to prepare my elevator speech. I listened intently to the HOD rehearsals and Monica and I tried to prepare **ourselves** as best as we could. I will say, hearing others practice in front of me was very helpful; however, it never lessened my anxiety. I suspect this very same anxiety is what everyone feels about venturing into the unknown.

Finally the day arrived and it was time to board the trains and travel to the offices where our appointments were set. Certain meetings stood out to me and I will share our experience with you. Our first meeting was with Representative Henry Brown. His Senior Legislative Assistant/Press Secretary Amanda Reynolds met with us first. She was very warm, receptive and asked us to wait just a moment, that Rep. Brown would see us. While we were waiting, Monica and I bent her ear about our initiatives, causes, and offered her a packet of information listing the bills we supported. Rep. Brown was such the southern gentleman, and reminded me of Col. Sanders with Kentucky Fried Chicken. He was very attentive, kind, and kissed us on the cheek and hugged us, took a photograph with us and offered to send us a signed copy. Rep Brown spent 30 minutes or more with us, as we discussed our plight with him. He asked me what is the baby for on my button which I wore saying, "Have you checked your medical record?" He was very clear that we need to go back to our local representatives who would be able to do much more for our cause than he would. He gave us names and directed us to the source where we would have the most power. I wanted to pass this information along to any of you that may not be aware of this, but especially in an election year, we have much more influence on a local level. Rep. Brown also suggested we see Senator Lindsey Graham, who did have more influence on a state and national level than he would. I am hoping that there will be an opportunity for Rep Brown to educate others so that when a topic is raised before him in the future, he will remember us and our plea for help. While in the meeting, Gigi came in and videotaped us with Rep Brown. I think she was blown away by the Southern gentle nature of this lovely grandfatherly man.

From this meeting we next went to US Senator Lindsey Graham's office and met with Colin Allen, the legislative assistant to Sen. Lindsey Graham. I found Colin to be very well informed and extremely receptive and equally supportive and well informed of the current legislature mentioned in our packet. The length of time was again, 30 minutes and the four of us who met with him pled our case well and he took notes and was very receptive to our requests for help in our industry. I believe we also educated him to the perspective from which we all view the healthcare industry and he took our business cards in return. Before we left, he told us that we must continue to speak up and spread the word, the truth about our situation, and don't give up. I was very pleased to hear these comments. We offered our services for free to assist with any information in the future and as constituents and business owners in his state, he promised to brief Senator Graham on our issues.

Our next visit was to US Senator Jim DeMint's office with whom we had a confirmed appointment. First we met with Erin Reeder, Legislative Correspondent and Peter J. Fotos, Policy Advisor to Senator DeMint of SC. After spending 30 minutes in this meeting briefing Erin Reeder on our situation, I was rather amazed at her attentive nature and questions to clarify our needs in order to be better informed. She was genuinely interested in our story and agreed to fully brief the Senator. Suddenly as we were winding down the meeting, a door behind me flew open and in walked Senator DeMint himself asking, "Which one of you is Trudi?" He knew that I had just won two state awards and wanted to congratulate me and he had brought a photographer with him and Monica and I stood on either side of him as the photographer took our picture with Sen DeMint between us. He promised us he would sign both pictures and send us a copy. Then we had him as a captive audience for about ten minutes as we quickly tried to hit the high points of our real reason for being there. He was very distressed about the workforce shortage and we mentioned the bills we would like to see sponsored and supported. He asked Erin to please make sure he is completely briefed on all of the information as he was dragged out of the door by aides who whisked him off to his next appointment. This was a very exciting meeting for us. Gigi was with us and took video shots of us with the Senator.



Advocacy Summit Experience continued.....

Since Monica is from Massachusetts, we took a chance, feeling bold at this point, and approached Senator Ted Kennedy's office. This was a totally cold call. I sat down and let Monica do the talking since she knows their lingo and speaks their language. One word out of my mouth and it would be obvious I wasn't from Mass. On the TV Screen on the wall, we could see Senator Kennedy on the house floor debating a healthcare bill while we were standing in his office. The aide placed calls to the Senator's policy advisor and emailed her as well. She was in the meeting with the Senator and they were neither available. This weekend, Monica is in Cape Cod for a wedding and it appears that the Senator would be at Cape Cod at the same time. After we left the office, and were having lunch, Monica received a telephone call from the Senator's office and the message from the aide was that the Senator would like to meet with both of us at the Cape this weekend. We were ecstatic—he would take our meeting! The next day we found out the Senator had experienced a seizure and his office has informed us that he is not taking any appointments anytime in the future as it now stands. This is highly unfortunate and I wish the Senator the best and hope he recovers completely. We will not give up on this appointment. We will continue to pursue this until a meeting is arranged. While the euphoria was short-lived regarding the meeting with the Senator who has sponsored all of the bills we were supporting, I like to think that in the future, we will have our meeting eventually.

We met with two other staffers who were all receptive and eager to hear our stories. After the experience on the Hill, I must say, I no longer have any anxiety over meeting with my representatives and senators. It is clear to me that they are here to represent us and that they will take our meetings and they will listen to our causes. What we need to do now is follow up with letters and continued contact with our representatives with news and new happenings in our industry henceforth. We should also increase our numbers, raise our voices, plan larger and larger advocacy days and bring new recruits along with us—the now experienced ones can show the novice advocacy day members how it's done-and relieve their anxiety. This is a totally worthy cause and one that will enlighten many to our situation. We are coming out of the broom closets in the back of the HIM Depts of hospitals, and we are finding our voices. Through every media outlet, every venue where the general public is available, we can spread the word. Every plane trip I take, who ever sits beside me is educated before they leave the plane. In restaurants, local community meetings and every opportunity I have, I am educating the masses. If we all do this, take part in this advocacy day every day—we will no longer be the enigmas of the Healthcare Industry.

One other thing I want to say is that I am extremely proud of my advocacy day and out of all of the things I have done in my life, this is one of my proudest moments. I overcame the anxiety, the fear and walked right in the door, shook hands, and started telling my story. Even more exciting for me was that everyone was listening. They will listen but we must first put ourselves out there in the public eye and tell our story. I am so very happy that I was able to step outside of my comfort zone and grow personally from the experience and next year, I will have a larger entourage with me as I embark on Washington, DC again.

Trudi Griffith, CMT, FAAMT
AHDI Directors 2008-2010



ANNOUNCEMENTS

AHDI-WA is proud to announce the launch of the new website!

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful webmaster, Mary McLaughlin, who has taken the time to create a new site for us in cyberspace. Be sure to check it out at www.ahdi-wa.org and bookmark the new site as the old one will be fading out over time. There is a Delegate's Corner where you can catch up with what is going on locally and nationally. You will find up-to-date info regarding credentialing, continuing education opportunities and Meet and Greet gatherings throughout the year. Be sure to check the website frequently as we update and add new items throughout the year.