

Dictation Best Practices

A Guide for Physicians

Why Do You Dictate?

Documentation is an Essential Ingredient of Good Medical Care

Good Documentation

- Accurate
- Complete
- Available When Needed

Quote or Quill

The Challenge

Communicate clearly and succinctly

Partners in Quality

Impact of Dictation

- Documentation errors
- Patient Safety
- Sentinel Events
- Turnaround Time
- Costs

Patients at Risk

US Leads in Medical Errors

View of the Courts

Good Dictation

- Improves communication among caregivers
- Promotes patient safety
- Reduces turnaround time from dictation to charting
- Ensures uncompromised reports as legal documents

Poor Dictation

- Leads to errors in transcription
- Puts patients at risk
- Slows and/or reduces reimbursement
- Impacts timely delivery of care
- Increases administrative and transcription costs

Problematic Dictation

- Incorrect verbiage or grammar
- Rapid speech
- Insufficient volume
- English as a second language
- Articulation

- Background noise
- Incorrect or insufficient patient information

Turnaround Time

- Quality patient care demands shorter turnaround time
- Problematic dictation can double or triple time spent transcribing
- Several problematic reports can affect timely delivery of all reports

Costs

- Inferior dictation increases administrative costs
- Inadequate dictation decreases or delays reimbursement
- Poor dictation can increase turnaround time, delaying treatment

Dictation

- Requires special attention to clarity and style
- No visual clues (lip movements, facial expressions)
- Asynchronous communication
- Lacks flow and rhythm of conversations
- More difficult to comprehend

Speech Recognition

- Realizing higher adoption rates
- Incapable of completely replacing transcriptionists
- Unable to interpret vast majority of dictators
- Requires *more* attention to organization and articulation

Environment

- Monitor background distractions such as voices, telephone ringing, and/or music
- Avoid side conversations

Organization

- Organize data before dictating
- Follow established templates

Equipment

- Refer to tip sheets for proper use of dictation equipment
- Use correct hand-held settings to avoid clipped words
- Hold the mic the proper distance from the mouth

Demographics

Courtesy

- Avoid eating and chewing gum
- Pause while yawning, coughing or sneezing
- Remember! We can hear what you wouldn't want us to hear!

Speech

Key Syllables

- "No" or "known"
- ABduction or ADduction
- hyPO or hyPER

Abbreviations

- Avoid uncommon abbreviations
- Use abbreviations from facility's approved list
- Give clues when dictating common abbreviations
 - BMP versus BNP
 - CNS versus C&S

Numbers

- Dictate numbers clearly and succinctly
- Differentiate "fifty" and "sixty"
(e.g. five-oh, six-oh)
- Delineate vital signs and lab values with test names

Medications

Carefully dictate medication names and dosages, especially those with sound-alikes (e.g. Endal, Inderal; MiraSept, Mircette)

Feedback

Dictation Tool Kit

- Dictation Fact Sheet
- Dictation 101
- Model Policies and Procedures
- Sample Q Cards
- Feedback Letter
- Tip Sheet

The Bottom Line

Contact

American Association for Medical Transcription, www.aamt.org, 800-982-2182