

PRESS RELEASE:

MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION INDUSTRY CELEBRATES HEALTH IT WEEK *Announces Support for Healthcare Reform that Promotes Patient Safety and Increases Accuracy of EHRs*

Also announces "Digital IT Platform" solution for secure & seamless exchange of information.

Washington, DC, November 3, 2009 - As health information managers and professionals across the country celebrate the health information & technology industry this week, the Association for Health Care Documentation Integrity (AHDI) and the Medical Transcription Industry Association (MTIA) announced their support for a healthcare reform package that improves electronic health records (EHRs) as well as patient safety.

"Medical transcriptionists represent a workforce that is critical to the accurate and safe transition to the EHR that will improve patient safety, ensure the accuracy of health records, and free up doctors to do what they do best - attend to their patients' needs," said Susan Lucci, President of AHDI. "We look forward to continuing to work with Congress, the Administration, and with healthcare professionals to implement reforms that will lead to a smooth transition to the EHR with a focus on patient safety first."

Today, MTIA, in conjunction with ICSA labs, an independent division of Verizon Business, announced the formation of the Medical Transcription Service Consortium (MTSC) to drive improved coordination of care and digital record exchange among hospitals, physician offices, and healthcare clinics through an effective framework, and secure and private IT platform.

According to MTIA, currently 8% of physician-patient encounters are documented via electronic medical records; by comparison, more than 80% employ the dictation-transcription process for this purpose. MTIA estimates that over 1.2 billion patient notes are dictated and transcribed annually, and currently the majority of those records *cannot* be imported into electronic medical records in digitally useful formats.

Working with Verizon Business, the consortium plans to offer an industry solution for medical transcription service providers to exchange medical records in digitally useful form. Verizon Business expects the platform to be available later this year.

"The IT platform under development will serve as an open, yet secure foundation for the transfer of digital patient data among physicians, hospitals, clinics, and other health care providers," said Rajeev Kapoor, global managing director of healthcare for Verizon. "Leveraging Verizon Business' broad portfolio of advanced IT, hosting and security solutions, professional services expertise and global IP network, the new platform will help MTSC members drive efficiency and improve patient outcomes as the adoption of electronic health records accelerates."

"This is an exciting time for the medical transcription industry, and we are excited about our position in the process as we continue to evolve," said Linda Yaniszewski, Chair of the MTIA Board of Directors. "The dictation-transcription process remains physicians' preferred means of documenting healthcare encounters. The process provides physicians with a quick and efficient documentation method. The patient narrative produced by the process offers physicians a rich and detailed source of information for clinical decision-making and helps facilitate proper reimbursement. By making the dictation-transcription process a key component of the transition to EHRs, healthcare enterprises, EHR vendors, and policymakers can ensure the government's multi-billion-dollar investment proves a fruitful one for physicians and patients."

AHDI and MTIA have also been working with members of Congress and the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) to ensure that the definition of meaningful use ONC is drafting recognizes the importance of structured narrative reports.

“These days, more people pay attention to their credit scores than they do their health history and records,” said Nick van Terheyden, a physician and Executive Committee member of the Health Story Project - an alliance of healthcare vendors, providers and associations working to produce data standards for the flow of medical health information. “Most Americans just rely on their primary care physicians to maintain their personal health records and are not aware that narrative history could be replaced with electronic health records.”

As founding members of the Health Story Project, AHDI and MTIA will be working with other members of the alliance this year to develop a public campaign to protect structured narrative reports to ensure patient care is delivered safely and more effectively by delivering more information to the clinician at point of care.

“Through our relationship with Health Story, we plan on spending the next year educating policy leaders on the important role that the medical transcription industry plays in the public health sector,” stated Peter Preziosi, PhD, CEO of AHDI and MTIA. “Our Digital IT Portal initiative underscores the importance of a robust and accurate transition to EHRs and ensures enormous growth potential for a workforce dedicated to patient safety, the highest standards of accuracy and to ensuring doctors can spend their valuable time with the patients who need them.”

About AHDI

The Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDI), formerly AAMT, has been the professional organization representing medical transcriptionists since 1978. AHDI sets standards of practice and education for medical transcriptionists, administers a dual credentialing program, has established a code of ethics, and advocates on behalf of the profession. There are nearly 100 component associations of AHDI, each of which holds regular educational meetings and symposia. For more information, visit www.ahdionline.org.

About MTIA

The not-for-profit Medical Transcription Industry Association (MTIA) is the world's largest trade association serving medical transcription service operators. Its mission is to create an environment in which medical transcription companies can prosper, grow, and deliver the highest level of healthcare documentation services. For more information, visit www.mtia.com. The two associations formed a strategic legal partnership in 2007 to pool critical resources and collaborate on key initiatives focused on optimizing healthcare delivery by providing timely, accurate and relevant clinical information.

About Health Story Project

Health Story is an alliance of healthcare vendors, providers, and associations, including AHDI and MTIA, which has pooled resources over the previous three years in a rapid-development initiative to produce data standards for the flow of information between common types of healthcare documents and electronic health records. Visit www.healthstory.com for more information.

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