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STYLE GUIDE

Transcription is a reflection of the healthcare provided.

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In addition to information contained in the Style Guide please refer to the following for further explanations and help:

- QA Team Bulletin board
- STS website
- MT resources listed on STS website

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations, acronyms, and brief forms are often used in medical dictation to speed up communication, but they frequently create confusion instead. In the numerous publications devoted to translating medical abbreviations, abbreviations with a single meaning appear to be in the minority. Clarity of communication is essential. Avoid the use of abbreviations, acronyms, and brief forms except for internationally recognized and accepted units of measure for widely recognized terms and symbols. Do not use any that readers will not immediately recognize. There is no nationally recognized list of approved abbreviations for use in medical reports, nor does AHDI propose such a list. However, it is important to note that the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) requires that in order to be accredited a hospital should use uniform data definitions whenever possible; they note that an abbreviation list (which might be interpreted as a list of abbreviations to avoid) is one way to meet this requirement.

1. The following abbreviations are unacceptable if dictated in abbreviated form. Transcribe as follows:

DICTATED	TRANSCRIBE
D-stick	Dextrostix
g	gram
gm	gram
h.s. and/or H.S.	"half-strength" and/or "at bed time"
l/1L	1 liter
kilos	kg
h	hour
y	year
d	day
mo	months
wk	week
q.d.	daily
cc (for liquid measurement)	ml/mL
s.q. or subq	subcutaneous/subcutaneously
q.o.d.	every other day
sun-sat	Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc.
'99	1999
mics or ug	mcg
OBGYN	OB/GYN
HU	Hounsfield unit
IU	International Unit
U or u	unit
t.i.w. or T.I.W.	"3 times weekly"
MS	morphine sulfate
M ₂ SO ₄	morphine sulfate
MgSO ₄	magnesium sulfate
D/C	discharge or discontinue
A.S./A.D./A.U.	left ear / right ear / both ears

Abbreviations/Dose Expression	Intended Meaning	Misinterpretation	Correction
Apothecary Symbols	dram minim	Misunderstood or misread (symbol for dram misread for "3" and minim misread for "mL")	Use the metric system
ARA ^o A	vidarabine	cytarabineARA ^o C	Use the complete spelling for all drug names
AZT	zidovudine (Retrovir)	azathioprine	
CPZ	Compazine (prochlorperazine)	chlorpromazine	
DPT	Demerol-Phenergan-Thorazine	diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus (vaccine)	
HCl	hydrochloric acid	potassium chloride (The "H" is misinterpreted as "K")	
HCT (if standing alone)	hydrocortisone See #10 below	hydrochlorothiazide	
HCTZ (if standing alone)	hydrochlorothiazide See #10 below	hydrocortisone (see As HCT250 mg)	
MTX	methotrexate	mitoxantrone	
TAC	triamcinolone	Tetracaine, Adrenalin, cocaine	
ZnSO ₄	zinc sulfate	morphine sulfate	
"Nitro" drip	nitroglycerin infusion	sodium nitroprusside infusion	
"Norflox"	norfloxacin	Norflex	
per os	orally	The "os" can be mistaken for "left eye"	Use "p.o.," "by mouth" or "orally"
qn	Nightly or at bed time	Misinterpreted as "qh" (every hour)	Use "nightly"
qhs	nightly at bedtime	Misread as every hour	Use "nightly" or "nightly at bedtime"
q6PM, etc	every evening at 6 PM	Misread as every six hours	Use 6 PM "nightly"
BT	bedtime	Mistaken as "BID" (twice daily)	Use "at bedtime"
ss	sliding scale (insulin) or ½ (apothecary)	Mistaken for "55"	Spell out "sliding scale" Use "one-half" or use "½"
> and <	greater than and less than	Mistakenly used opposite of intended	Use "greater than" or "less than"
Name letters and dose numbers run together (e.g., Inderal 40 mg)	Inderal 40 mg	Misread as Inderal 140 mg	Always use space between drug name, dose and unit of measurement.

2. Do not use abbreviations within admission diagnoses, impressions, assessments, discharge diagnoses, preoperative and postoperative diagnoses or the headings of operations and/or procedures.
3. Only use an abbreviation at the beginning of a sentence if the abbreviation begins with a capital letter.

Example:

Dictated: WBC was 9200.

Transcribed: WBC was 9200.

Dictated: pH was 8.4.

Transcribed: The patient's pH was 8.4.

4. Metric measurement should be abbreviated when preceded by a number.

Examples:

180 mg

100 mL/ml

5 cm

5. Use the following abbreviations when preceded by a number.

Examples:

cm	ml/mL	mm
----	-------	----

kg	mEq	mg
----	-----	----

mcg	m/sec	m/s
-----	-------	-----

6. Spell out an abbreviation if no number is given in conjunction with the abbreviations.

Example:

A few centimeters.

7. Professional credentials after a person's name should not be transcribed with periods between the letters.

Examples:

MD

DO

OT

PhD

8. Always use the following abbreviations EVEN WHEN dictated in full.

Examples:

SIMV

pCO₂/PCO₂

aVL

CT

MRA

pH

pO₂/PO₂

aVR

MRI

mCi

INT

KUB

aVF

CAT

mmHg

INR

BUN

PPD

PET

9. Do not expand EKG, ECG, BNP or I&D if dictated in eponym form unless dictated in full as there is more than one definition.

Dictated: EKG was normal.
Transcribed: EKG was normal.

Dictated: ECG showed no acute change.
Transcribed: ECG showed no acute change.

Dictated: The patient had an I and D.
Transcribed: The patient had an I&D.

Dictated: The patient's BNP was elevated
Transcribe: The patient's BNP was elevated.

10. If the physician dictates HCTZ or HCT alone, ALWAYS expand. DO NOT USE THE ABBREVIATION ALONE, even if the physician dictates it this way.

If the physician dictates drug combination, lisinopril/HCTZ or lisinopril and hydrochlorothiazide, either/or is acceptable because it can be documented both ways and it is acceptable according to Joint Commission for the abbreviations HCTZ/HCT to be used in combination with another drug.

APOSTROPHES

1. Note the correct placement of an apostrophe when expressing a time span in a possessive form.

Examples:

1 month's time
an hour's delay
2 months' time
7 months' gestation

2. Do not use contractions except when transcribing a quote that uses them.
3. Do not use an apostrophe when using the plural form of a number, unless it is a singular number.

Examples:

The patient's blood sugar ran in the low 100s.
His respirations stabilized in the low 20s.
The patient was last seen in the 1940s.
Heart rate was in the 120s.

4. Do not add an apostrophe to form the plural form of an abbreviation.

Examples:

PVCs
ABGs
EKGs

5. Use an apostrophe with a single letter abbreviation or number.

Example:

Serial K's

CAPITALIZATION

1. Always capitalize genus names and their abbreviated forms when they are accompanied by a species name. Please refer to the QA bulletin board for further clarification.

Examples:

Campylobacter jejuni
Staphylococcus aureus
Helicobacter pylori
Enterococcus faecalis

2. Capitalize eponyms.

Examples:

Parkinson disease
Cushing syndrome
Gram stain
Coumadin

3. Do not capitalize words derived from eponyms.

Examples:

parkinsonism
cushingoid facies
gram-negative
coumadinized
coumadinization

4. Do not capitalize a noun following a trade or brand name.

Examples:

drops
capsules
pills
tablets
metered-dose inhaler
elixir

5. Capitalize ethnic groups.

Examples:

African American
Caucasian
Hispanic

6. Do not capitalize color designations.

Examples:

black
white

7. Do not capitalize sexual preferences.

Examples:

gay
heterosexual
lesbian

8. Seasons do not need to be capitalized.

Examples:

spring
summer
fall
winter

9. Do not capitalize the Greek alphabet.

Examples:

alpha
beta
theta
lamda
gamma

COLONS

1. Do not use a colon when transcribing military time.

Example:

The injury occurred at 1830 hours.

2. Express ratios with Arabic numbers and a colon.

Example:

Dictated: I to E one to four.

Transcribed: I to E (or I-to-E, I/E, I:E) ratio is 1:4

Dictated: Epinephrine 1 to 100,000

Transcribed: Epinephrine 1:100,000

3. There should not be a colon next to a heading that does not have text immediately following the heading (see Report Formatting).

COMMAS

1. If a dictator lists several items in a series and joins them by the word “and,” all but the last and is to be deleted and replaced by commas. (Please reference page 90 of the AHDI Style Guide.)

Example:

Dictated: The patient was on Coumadin and Inderal and digoxin and Lasix.

Transcribed: The patient was on Coumadin, Inderal, digoxin and Lasix.

2. Do not separate parts of a medication plan by commas.

Unacceptable: The patient was discharged on prednisone 60 mg, for 3 days, 40 mg, for 3 days, 20 mg, for 3 days, 10 mg, for 2 days, then off.

Acceptable: The patient was discharged on prednisone 60 mg for 3 days, 40 mg for 3 days, 20 mg for 3 days, 10 mg for 2 days, then off.

Unacceptable: The patient was discharged on Carafate 1 gram, 4 times daily, 40 minutes after meals and at bedtime, bethanechol 25 mg, p.o., q.i.d., and Reglan 5 mg, at bedtime, on a trial basis.

Acceptable: The patient was discharged on Carafate 1 gram 4 times daily, 40 minutes after meals and at bedtime; bethanechol 25 mg p.o. q.i.d.; and Reglan 5 mg at bedtime on a trial basis.

3. Use a comma after a complete date.

Example:

The patient was admitted on December 14, 1993, to Saint Michael Hospital.

4. Do not use a comma when only the month and year have been dictated.

Example:

The patient was admitted in December 1993 at Saint Michael Hospital.

5. Use a comma in numbers with five or more digits.

Example:

12,345

6. Do not use a comma in a number containing a decimal point.

Example:

12345.67

7. Use a comma before and after a Latin abbreviation (and their translations), within a sentence.

Examples:

etc.

i.e.

e.g.

et al.

viz.

Her symptoms come on with exertion, for example, when climbing stairs or running.

The patient was given proper instructions, i.e., a head injury sheet and a sprain injury sheet.

8. Use a comma to separate city and state.

Example:

She was born in Columbus, Ohio, in 1954.

COMMONLY CONFUSED TERMS

In addition to the below, you can refer to the following for further explanations and help.

- Pages 511 – 525 of the AHDI 3rd Edition Book of Style for a more in depth list of commonly confused terms
- QA Team Bulletin Board
- Blue Book of Grammar <http://www.grammarbook.com/homonyms/confusing-words-1.asp>

access – passage

excess – beyond normal

affect – as a verb, means to influence or change; as a noun, means an expressed or observed emotion or feeling

effect – as a verb, means to bring about or cause to happen; as a noun, means result

assess- to evaluate

axes – plural of axis

axis – a reference line, an artery that divides

cannot - one word

coarse – lacking refinement

course – a path taken

crepitus - the crackling sound produced by the rubbing together of bone fragments, dry synovial surfaces of joints, discharge of flatus from bowels, crackling sounds heard in the lungs (refer to the dictionary)

crepitation – the noise made by rubbing together the ends of a fractured bone

crepitant – used as an adjective, i.e., crepitant rales

crepittance – although crepittance is not found in dictionaries, its frequent usage has made it acceptable

decubiti – not a word

decubitus – the act of lying down

elicit – to bring out

illicit – illegal

eminent – prominent, to stand out

imminent - ready to take place

en route – on the way

fascicular – a small bundle

vesicular – a small cavity or cell

fiancee – female engaged

fiance – man engaged

flare-up – sudden out break

flair-up (is not a word) – flair is a knack for something

follow up – (verb) we will follow up with regular return visits

followup – (noun) the patient did not return for followup; (adjective) in followup visits, she appeared to improve

follow-up – the hyphenated form is an acceptable alternative to followup

gap – an opening

gape – to become widely open or separated, i.e., on the forehead is a 1.5-cm gaping laceration

ileum – the distal portion of the small intestine, extending from the jejunum to the cecum

ilium – the expansive superior portion of the hip bone

in situ – confined to the site of origin without invasion of neighboring tissues

it's - it is

its - possessive

ladies - plural

lady's - possessive
lay - put down or the past tense of lie
lie – to recline
lying – to lay by your own power
laying – to lay by another person's power
melanic stools - NOT melanotic stool-even if dictated
model or modeled – something that represents or simulates something else; a replica
mottled - discoloration
nitrate drugs - used for cardiac purposes
nitrites - in the urine
perineal – pertaining to the perineum – the pelvic floor and surrounding structures, the region between the thighs
peroneal – pertaining to the fibula or the outer side of the leg
performed - to entertain
performed - to shape
perfusion – passage of fluid through the vessels of a specific organ
profusion – an abundant outpouring or display; a score reflecting the number of visible lesions on chest radiographs
pleural – lining of the lungs
plural – more than one
quit – to depart from; leave; to give up
quiet – making no noise; silent
quite – to the greatest extent; completely; actually; really
role – a character or part played by an actor in a dramatic performance
roll – to move forward along a surface by revolving on an axis or by repeatedly turning over
scene – a place where action occurred
seen – to see with your eyes
shoddy – poor quality
shotty – small and BB-like, i.e., the patient has shotty anterior lymph nodes
to – in the direction of; reaching as far as; to the extent or degree of; in a direction toward
too – also; as well as; more than enough
track – the path, route, or course indicated by such marks
tract – a system of organs and tissues that together perform one specialized function
verses – in the Bible
versus – one against another
vesicular – a small cavity or cell
vial - small container
vile – disgusting
waste – to use, consume, or expend thoughtlessly or carelessly
waist – the part of the human trunk between the bottom of the rib cage and the pelvis
wander – to move
wonder – astonishment or surprise
wheals - swelling of the skin
wheels – a solid disk

DATES/TIMES

1. When the month, day, and year are given in this sequence, set off the year by commas.

Example:

She was admitted on December 14, 2001, and discharged on January 4, 2002.

2. Do not use commas when the month and year are given without the day.

Example:

She was admitted in December 2001 and discharged in January 2002.

3. If a physician dictates the month (11) and the year (05) only, please spell out to avoid confusion of the year being the day.

Example:

Dictated: 11/05

Transcribe: November 2005

4. Do not use commas when the military date sequence (day, month, year) is used.

Example:

She was admitted on 14 December 2001 and discharged on 4 January 2002.

5. When military date is used, the year must be complete.

Example:

Dictated: 15 January 05

Transcribed: 15 January 2005

6. When military date and time sequence is used at the beginning of a report, it must be used throughout the report for consistency.

7. Military Conversion Chart

Midnight = 0000 hours	12:00 (Noon) = 1200 hours
1:00 a.m. = 0100 hours	1:00 p.m. = 1300 hours
2:00 a.m. = 0200 hours	2:00 p.m. = 1400 hours
3:00 a.m. = 0300 hours	3:00 p.m. = 1500 hours
4:00 a.m. = 0400 hours	4:00 p.m. = 1600 hours
5:00 a.m. = 0500 hours	5:00 p.m. = 1700 hours
6:00 a.m. = 0600 hours	6:00 p.m. = 1800 hours
7:00 a.m. = 0700 hours	7:00 p.m. = 1900 hours
8:00 a.m. = 0800 hours	8:00 p.m. = 2000 hours
9:00 a.m. = 0900 hours	9:00 p.m. = 2100 hours
10:00 a.m. = 1000 hours	10:00 p.m. = 2200 hours
11:00 a.m. = 1100 hours	11:00 p.m. = 2300 hours

8. Use numbers when transcribing time.

Examples:

Exception:

6 p.m.	noon not 12 o'clock
6 o'clock in the morning	midnight not 12 o'clock
1800 hours	

9. Use ordinals when the day precedes the month.

Example:

The patient was admitted the 4th of April 2001.

10. When only the month and day are dictated, and not the year, add the year only if you are certain what year is being referred to.

Example:

Dictated: The patient was last seen on April 4th.

Transcribed: The patient was last seen on April 4, 2001.

11. Do not divide dates at the end of a line of text.

Unacceptable:

The patient was seen in for bilateral otitis media and congestion on February 17, 2002.

Unacceptable:

The patient was seen in for bilateral otitis media and congestion on February 17, 2002.

Acceptable:

The patient was seen in the office for right otitis media and nasal congestion on February 17, 2002.

DIAGNOSES

1. With the exception of the abbreviations on the DO NOT EXPAND list on page 6, do not use abbreviations within the headings of admission diagnoses, impression, assessment, discharge diagnoses, preoperative and postoperative diagnoses, or operations and/or procedures.

Examples:

Dictated:

DIAGNOSES

Appendicitis.

History of CABG.

Transcribed:

DIAGNOSES

Appendicitis.

History of coronary artery bypass graft.

Examples:
Dictated:
PREOPERATIVE DIAGNOSIS
Difficulty swallowing.

POSTOPERATIVE DIAGNOSIS
Esophageal stricture.

PROCEDURE
EGD with esophageal dilatation.

Transcribe:
PREOPERATIVE DIAGNOSIS
Difficulty swallowing.

POSTOPERATIVE DIAGNOSIS
Esophageal stricture.

PROCEDURE
Esophagogastroduodenoscopy with esophageal dilatation.

However, when the name of the procedure is dictated within the narrative of the report, type exactly as the doctor dictates.

Dictated:
The patient will undergo an EGD.

Transcribe:
The patient will undergo an EGD.

2. Do not number if there is only one diagnosis.

Example:
DISCHARGE DIAGNOSIS
Congestive heart failure.

3. When more than one diagnosis is dictated, the word diagnosis must be changed to diagnoses.

Example:
DISCHARGE DIAGNOSES
1. Congestive heart failure.
2. Atrial fibrillation.
3. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

4. Psychiatric diagnoses. A multi-axial system is often used in diagnosing psychiatric patients.

Example:

Axis I Psychiatric disorders except mood disorders and mental retardation.
Axis II Personality disorders and mental retardation.
Axis III General medical conditions.
Axis IV Psychosocial and environmental problems.
Axis V Assessment of function, usually using the global assessment of functioning (GAF) scale. The following example demonstrates a typical psychiatric diagnosis along with the applicable diagnostic codes found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition (DSM-IV), which are consistent with ICD-9-CM and ICD-10 codes.

Example:

Axis I Major depressive disorder, single episode, severe, without psychotic features.
Axis II Dependent personality disorder.
Axis III None.
Axis IV Threat of job loss.
Axis V GAF 3.

5. Retype diagnosis when “secondary to #1” is dictated.

Dictated:

DIAGNOSES

1. Diabetes mellitus.
2. Diabetic ketoacidosis secondary to above.

Transcribe:

DIAGNOSES

Diabetes mellitus.
Diabetic ketoacidosis secondary to diabetes mellitus.

Dictated:

DIAGNOSES:

Congestive heart failure.
Diabetic ketoacidosis.
Hepatitis.
Death secondary to above.

Transcribe:

DIAGNOSES:

Congestive heart failure.
Diabetic ketoacidosis.
Hepatitis.
Death secondary to above.

DIAGNOSTIC DATA

Separate unrelated tests by periods, separate test components with commas. Type in paragraph form OR as doctor dictates.

Examples:

DIAGNOSTIC DATA

White count 5.9, hemoglobin 14.6, hematocrit 43.1 and platelet count 195,000. Urine specific gravity 1.006, pH 6, negative dipstick. Sodium 139, potassium 4.6, chloride 106, bicarb 28, BUN 15, creatinine 0.9, glucose 132. X-rays of cervical spine and lumbosacral spine within normal limits. X-rays of pelvis and chest within normal limits. ECG within normal limits.

OR

DIAGNOSTIC DATA

White count 5.9, hemoglobin 14.6, hematocrit 43.1 and platelet count 195,000. Urine specific gravity 1.006, pH 6, negative dipstick. Sodium 139, potassium 4.6, chloride 106, bicarb 28, BUN 15, creatinine 0.9, glucose 132.

X-rays of cervical spine and lumbosacral spine within normal limits. X-rays of pelvis and chest within normal limits.

ECG within normal limits.

OR

DIAGNOSTIC DATA

Laboratory results are as follows: White count 5.9, hemoglobin 14.6, hematocrit 43.1 and platelet count 195,000. Urine specific gravity 1.006, pH 6, negative dipstick. Sodium 139, potassium 4.6, chloride 106, bicarb 28, BUN 15, creatinine 0.9, glucose 132. X-rays of cervical spine and lumbosacral spine within normal limits. X-rays of pelvis and chest within normal limits. ECG within normal limits.

The following is a list of tests that may be dictated under DIAGNOSTIC DATA. This is an example only to help differentiate what components go with which test. (It should be typed in the format on the previous page.)

COMPLETE BLOOD COUNT (CBC): Hemoglobin, hematocrit, white blood cells, red blood cells, platelets, MCV, MCH, MCHC, RDW. **For clarity, please be sure to add the zeros at the end of platelets.**

Example:

Dictated

Platelets 195

Transcribe:

Platelets 195,0000

CBC DIFFERENTIAL: Neutrophils, banded cells (bands), eosinophils (eos), lymphocytes

(lymphs), monocytes (monos), segmented cells (segs), epithelials (epis), polymorphonuclears (polys), metamyelocytes (metas), basophils (baso).

COMPREHENSIVE METABOLIC PROFILE: Sodium, potassium, BUN, creatinine, bicarbonate, chloride, glucose, carbon dioxide (CO₂), anion gap.

URINALYSIS (UA): Specific gravity, leukocyte esterase, pH, bacteria, red blood cells, white blood cells, nitrites, glucose, casts.

CARDIAC ENZYMES: CK, MB, CK-MB, troponin-I, relative index, CPK, BNP, isoenzymes.

CARDIOLOGY/NEUROLOGIC: EEG, EKG, ECHO, thallium scan, cardiac catheterization, BNP. EKG LEADS – Leads I, II, III; aVF, aVL, aVR; V1, V2, V3, V4, V5, V6.

COAGULATION STUDIES (COAGS): PT, PTT, INR.

LIVER FUNCTION TESTS (LFT): Alkaline phosphatase (alk phos), ALT (SGPT), AST (SGOT), LD, LDH, GGT, total bilirubin, direct bilirubin, indirect bilirubin, albumin, calcium, globulin. Amylase and lipase.

ARTERIAL BLOOD GAS (ABG): pH, pO₂, pCO₂, pulse oximetry, base excess, carboxyhemoglobin, myoglobin.

RADIOLOGY: Chest x-ray, bone scan, CT scan, CAT scan, MRI, MRA, thyroid uptake scan, PET scan.

HYPHENS

Refer to pages 125 – 132 of the AHDI 3rd Edition Book of Style.

****QA Team will not change/correct if you use hyphens.****

NUMBERS

1. Numerals should be used exclusively as opposed to spelled-out numbers unless used as a pronoun. (see #2)

Examples:

The patient was seen in the emergency room 1 hour after the accident.

The patient was prescribed 3 different medications without success.

The infant weighed less than 5 pounds.

2. Spell out numbers used as pronouns.

Examples:

The radiologist compared the previous x-rays with the most recent ones.

The physician reviewed one of the prior EKGs.

The patient has 2 children; currently one lives in Georgia and the other lives in Alabama.

3. Spell out numbers at the beginning of a sentence.

Example:

Dictated: 4-mm thin slice axial scans were obtained.

Transcribe: Four-millimeter thin slice axial scans were obtained.

Or transcribe: Thin slice 4-mm axial scans were obtained.

4. Spell one of the numbers or you may use a comma when used consecutively.

Examples:

The patient was instructed to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water.

The patient was prescribed Os-Cal 500 one daily.

5. Use Arabic numbers to express the Apgar score of an infant, but please spell out the minutes at which the scores are taken after birth.

Example:

The Apgars were 8 at one and 10 at five.

6. Use numbers when referring to an incision or lesion site.

Examples:

An incision was made at the 12 o'clock position.

There was a lesion noted at the 2 o'clock position.

The incision was made from the 4:30 to 6:30 position.

7. Zero is always spelled out when it stands alone within a sentence unless it refers to medicines, laboratory, suture material or degrees.

Examples:

Albumin 0.004.

The temperature was below zero.

8. Use a zero in front of a value expressed with a decimal.

Example:

Dictated: Digoxin .125 mg was prescribed.

Transcribed: Digoxin 0.125 mg was prescribed.

9. A "trailing zero" may not be used in medication orders or other medication-related documentation.

Example:

Dictated: The patient was given 5.0 mg of Valium.

Transcribed: The patient was given 5 mg of Valium.

EXCEPTION: A "trailing zero" may be used only where required to demonstrate the level of precision of the value being reported, such as for laboratory results, imaging studies that report size of lesions, or catheter/tube sizes. Transcribe exactly what the doctor says, i.e.

Dictated: The patient had a 4.0 cm lesion on his leg.
Transcribe: The patient had a 4.0 cm lesion on his leg.

OR

Dictated: The patient had a 4 cm lesion on his leg.
Transcribe: The patient had a 4 cm lesion on his leg.

10. Use decimals with metric measurements.

Examples:

There was a 2.5-cm laceration on the right index finger.
The patient weighed 225.5 kg.

11. Use fractions with American measurements.

Examples:

There was a 1/4-inch laceration on the right index finger.
The patient's weight has decreased to 148-1/2 pounds.

12. Do not use a fraction in a percentage.

Examples:

Dictated: The patient was given 1/4% Marcaine.
Transcribe: The patient was given 0.25% Marcaine.

13. Arabic versus Roman numerals are as follows (refer to page 71-79 in the AHDI Style Guide):

Stages are Arabic except for cancer stages, which are Roman.

Arabic

gravidia 2, para 1, AB 0

gravidia 2, para 1-0-0-1

class 2

grade 2/6 systolic murmur

grade 1/6 to 2/6 systolic murmur

EKG leads V1 through V6

cancer grades 1 through 4

visual acuity 20/100

Diabetes mellitus type 1 & 2

type 1 and 2 acromioclavicular process injuries

grade 3 placenta

grade 1 spondylolisthesis

grade 2 anterolisthesis

sleep stages 1, 2, 3, 4

Roman
Billroth II anastomosis
type II hyperlipoproteinemia
Factor VIII (blood clotting factor)
cranial nerves II through XII
cancer stages I through IV
Pap class IV
EKG lead I, lead II, lead III
Cardiac Class/Failure I, II, III, IV
Tanner Growth Chart – I, II, III, IV, V
type I-IV tendon tears
Salter I, II fractures

14. Tumor staging. T refers to tumors, N refers to nodes, M refers to metastases.

Example:
T3N0M0

15. Use numerals to express ordinals.

Examples:
1st
2nd
3rd
4th

16. Miscellaneous numbering.

Examples:
1/5 to 2+/5 motor strength
3/6 to 4/6 systolic murmur
grade 4 to 5 over 6 murmur
CO₂ (O not zero)
0 Vicryl
1-0 Vicryl
8.5 hertz

PLURALS

It is often difficult to determine whether a physician is dictating a particular term in the plural or singular form. Be careful when transcribing and if in doubt, look the word up in the medical dictionary. In the following list we show some of the commonly misused terms in their singular and plural forms:

Examples:

SINGULAR FORM

vertebra
diagnosis
attention when used in the heading of a report, i.e., if more than 1 diagnosis is given it should be plural. This is a common mistake made by most transcriptionists)
index
iris
sclera
naris (nare is not a word)
conjunctiva
focus
bulla
diverticulum
adnexum
(never used in singular form)
decubitus
decubiti, but decubiti is not a word)
epididymis (epididymi – not a word)
structure along the posterior border to the testes

PLURAL FORM

vertebrae
diagnoses (pay special
indices
irides
sclerae
nares
conjunctivae
foci
bullae
diverticula
adnexa

decubitus (a lot of doctors dictate
epididymides – the elongated cord

QUOTATION MARKS

Place quotation marks at the beginning and end of a quotation.

Commas

Always place the comma following a quotation inside the closing quotation mark.

The patient stated that “the itching is driving me crazy,” and she scratched her arms throughout our meeting.

Periods

Always place the period inside quotation marks.

The consultant’s report reads, “The patient is a 21-year-old male referred to me by Dr. Wilson.”

Question Marks

The placement of a question mark in relationship to ending quotation mark depends on the meaning.

Place the question mark inside the ending quotation mark if the material being quoted is in the form of a question. Follow she said or similar attributions with a comma when they precede a quoted question. (Note that no period follows the quotation; never combine a question mark with a period.)

The patient asked, "Must I return for followup if my symptoms do not reappear?"

Place the question mark outside the ending quotation mark if the quoted matter is not itself a question but is placed within an interrogative sentence.

Do you think he meant it when he said, "You will be hearing from my attorney about this"?

Semicolons

Place the semicolon outside the quotation marks.

The patient clearly stated "no allergies"; yet, his medical record states he is allergic to penicillin.

REPORT FORMAT RULES

1. ALLERGIES - All caps (do not bold)

EXAMPLE:

ALLERGIES:

1. PENICILLIN.
2. CODEINE.

OR

ALLERGIES:

PENICILLIN AND CODEINE.

OR

ALLERGIES:

NO KNOWN DRUG ALLERGIES.

2. ADVANCED DIRECTIVES - All caps. Do not bold and do not abbreviate

EXAMPLE:

The patient is a FULL CODE.

The patient's code status is DO NOT RESUSCITATE/DO NOT INTUBATE.

The patient is a NO CODE.

Per the patient's wishes, she is a DO NOT RESUSCITATE

If the physician refers only to “code status” transcribe in lower case.

EXAMPLE:

I will discuss code status with the patient and family.

Code status was discussed with the patient, and he wishes NO LIFE-PROLONGING MEASURES.

When the dictator indicates a question not to be confused with questionable etiology.

Examples:

Dictated: Diagnosis: Appendicitis, question mark.

Transcribed: Diagnosis: Appendicitis, (?).

Dictated: Diagnosis: Abdominal pain of questionable etiology.

Transcribed: Diagnosis: Abdominal pain of questionable etiology.

3. Do not separate proper names and titles. They should remain together on one line.

Examples:

Unacceptable: The patient was seen on Sunday by Dr.
 William Black.

Unacceptable: The patient was seen on Sunday by Dr. William
 Black.

Acceptable: The patient was seen for his bilateral otitis media by Dr. William Black.

4. Do not separate measurements and units of measurement. They should remain together on 1 line.

Examples:

Unacceptable: The patient was seen in the emergency room with a 1.5-
 cm laceration.

Acceptable: The patient was seen in the emergency room with a 1.5-cm laceration.

Unacceptable: The patient was given Lortab 7.5
 mg for pain in the emergency room.

Acceptable: The patient was given Lortab 7.5 mg for pain in the emergency room.

5. Headings are on a line by themselves with the supporting text starting on the line immediately below.
6. Headings in ROS/PE are okay to transcribe abbreviated or spelled out unless account has a specific protocol.

7. When a doctor dictates more than 1 report on a job number please number these jobs using A, B, C, etc.

Examples:

First patient – JOB NUMBER 3456A (or 3456-A)

Second patient – JOB NUMBER 3456B (or 3456-B)

Third patient – JOB NUMBER 3456C (or 3456-C)

8. When you have items that are numbered, after putting the number hit your tab key, this will make the text wrap appropriately.

Example:

DISCHARGE PLAN

1. The patient is to resume her current medications with the addition of Coumadin 2.5/5 mg daily, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Sunday 2.5 mg. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 5 mg.
2. The patient will return to the office in 2-3 weeks for repeat EKG.

9. When transcribing the lab data, EKG, EEG, etc., these will be under a heading called DIAGNOSTIC DATA.

EXAMPLE:

Dictated:

Lab data

Transcribe:

DIAGNOSTIC DATA

10. Under the physical exam, you should list the body part in the correct anatomical section it pertains to, i.e., ankle should be under extremity and not ankle.

Example:

Dictated: ANKLE: The left ankle was swollen and red.

Transcribed: EXTREMITIES: The left ankle was swollen and red.

11. Do not use periods after the physician's name in a heading.

CORRECT:

SURGEON

Dr. Hannah Morris

INCORRECT:

SURGEON

Dr. Hannah Morris.

SYMBOLS

1. If the word “times” is dictated before a number use a small x symbol. Do not use a space between the x and the number.

Example:

Urine culture showed no growth x2.

2. If the word “times” is dictated without a number or after a number then spell out the word times.

Example:

The patient was instructed to exercise 3 times a week.

The patient was instructed to take a pill several times a day.

3. If the word by is dictated when referring to a dimension use a small x symbol.

Example:

Dictated:

The specimen measures 2 by 1 by 3 cm.

Transcribe:

The specimen measured 2 x 1 x 3 cm.

4. Do not use the plus and minus signs in blood types.

Examples:

The patient was Rh positive.

The patient’s blood was found to be A positive.

5. Do not use the plus sign without a numeral.

Example:

1+ edema

+1 pulses

-1 station

6. Use the plus and minus sign with tables and test results.

Examples:

+/- Murphy’s sign

3+ gram-positive cocci

7. Use with certain single-letter abbreviations separated by and. Do not space before or after the ampersand. Do not use ampersand forms in operative titles or diagnoses.

Examples:

D&C

T&A

Dictated:

OPERATIONS

D and C.

TRANSCRIBE:

OPERATIONS

Dilatation and curettage.

Check appropriate references to identify other acceptable uses.

Some businesses use the ampersand in their name. Follow their style preferences.

Example:

Bausch & Lomb

8. Avoid using more than one virgule (slash) per expression.

INCORRECT:

mcg/kg/min

CORRECT:

mcg/kg per minute

INCORRECT:

MI/mmHg/min

CORRECT:

MI/mmHg per minute

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I have received the STS Style Guide and have read it in its entirety.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

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