

HOW MUCH CAN I EXPECT TO EARN?



How much you can expect to earn really depends on what the “going rate per line” is in your area and how many lines per hour you can type. (If you take advantage of the auto text/shorthand programs available to you, such as the auto correct and auto text in Word®, or the PRD+, you can increase your output by at least 100 to 200 lines per hour, sometimes more.)

However, a very rough idea would be \$25,000 part-time and \$50,000 full time. If you decide to subcontract and expand your business, you can make upwards of \$50,000+ per year. The company I first worked for was making \$70,000 per year in 1994, and at that time they were charging the doctors nine cents per line. They hired four girls to work for them, subcontracting, and the owner herself typed about 1000 lines per day. There is no hard and fast figure, as you are the one who decides how much you want to work.

You can adjust to however much you want to take on. You can therefore earn as much or as little as you want! The great thing about this business is that you can start with just one small account and build up your speed slowly. If you take on a group of doctors straight away, that could be quite overwhelming.

For instance, a small account, that is perhaps 400 lines per day, would take an average of two hours, if typing a moderate speed, probably around 60 wpm. At 12 cents per line, you just earned \$48.00. At 10 cents per line, you just earned \$40.00. Some transcriptionists charge by the page or by the character, but it is important to remember that by charging by the character you will earn less money. It is better to charge by the line.

Of course, as with any new account, the first few times you type a transcription tape it will take longer, while you get used to the terminology and the format, as well as the physician’s voice and habits. But before you know it, you just fly through the tapes.

Surveys have been performed to determine how much transcriptionists are charging. Some people charge by the character, others by the page, but this book will only be discussing rates per line. I believe this is the easiest way to charge.

From the surveys I have seen, the Northwest, the East, and the South of the USA charge between 10 and 16 cents per line. The West and the Midwest seem to be on the lower side at 8 to 16 cents per line.

In my area, which is South Florida, the going rate is between 12 and 16 cents per line. I currently charge 13 cents per line. The best thing to do is to find out what the going rate is in your area, if possible, by contacting other medical transcriptionists, or perhaps perform your own survey and call some offices. You won't want to price yourself out of the market, nor would you want to under-price your services.

I use a program with Word® that counts my lines, www.count-lines.com and therefore I charge the same for every typed line, whether it has one word on it or twelve. Most line counting programs will count gross lines, selected text, or characters per line. They also keep a log for you.

You will also need to set prices for special services such as faxes, addressing envelopes, stat work, copies, special delivery, or any other requests. I personally charge half the line rate again for stat work. For instance, if your usual rate is 10 cents per line and you offer 24-hour turnaround, you would charge 15 cents a line for stat rate, which could be immediate turnaround or whatever you have agreed upon with the physician. Some transcriptionists charge the usual amount per line plus a per page fee for stat reports.

The fees for faxes vary as well. It is not uncommon for transcriptionists to charge \$1.00 to \$2.00 per page. However, I personally think this is a bit high unless it is a long distance call. I think 50 cents per page is more reasonable.

When pricing for copies, make sure to cover the cost of the toner, paper, and your time. Ten cents per copy should be reasonable, but yet again, this is up to you.

For special deliveries, it is normal to charge for your time. If you consistently make \$30.00 an hour, and it takes you thirty minutes to deliver and get back home, you would charge \$15.00. Don't undercut yourself here. It takes time out of your day and you should be compensated for it.

When you raise your rates, which for me has been only three or four times in fourteen years, as I have kept within the range for my area, make sure you give a written notification and at least 30 days notice. I have found it best to send the letter in December notifying the client of a raise in January. It is best to include the costs of your special services in this letter, not just the line rate. Be sure to tell the client in the letter how much you enjoy working with them and their staff, and that you look forward to continuing to do so. Give them the opportunity to ask any questions. Hopefully by this time you will have built a solid, reliable business relationship with your client and the raising of rates should not be an issue.

This is a flexible and profitable business, and by taking the essential courses for Medical Transcription, like the ones I recommend, you can have a successful business in a matter of months vs. the two years, which it would take to get the degree!

Medical transcription is a great home business because you can even do this part-time in the evenings if you wish. It can fit in around a full-time work schedule if you start with a small account. Many people start this way and many people stay this way. For those who don't want to give up a job because of the benefits, or whatever the reason, medical transcription is perfect for bringing in some extra money. Others find that they enjoy the working-at-home aspect of the business so much that they can't wait to quit their day job. Obviously everybody's circumstances are different. The potential to earn a lot of money is available with medical transcription. Some companies grow so big they hire more than 50 employees and rent office space to accommodate them. The sky is the limit. Really!

