

# Medical Records Clerk

## Job Description:

When a patient receives care, various reports, documents, and other communications are generated in connection with the medical evaluation, treatment, and follow-up care. Medical records clerks classify, store, retrieve, and update this information. They examine incoming material and organize and store the documents according to the filing system used in their organization. Filing and retrieval systems are becoming increasingly computerized, but the degree to which computers are used varies from one facility to another. Regardless of the method of storage, an understanding of medical terminology helps clerks perform their tasks more efficiently and more accurately.

Patient files must be kept up to date and organized properly for quick retrieval by health care professionals. When a request for a medical record is received, the clerk obtains the needed information and notes that it has been borrowed because the location of all records must be tracked.

Medical records clerks have little or no contact with patients. They work in hospitals, clinics, physicians' offices, or any location where patient records are kept.

## Duties and Responsibilities:

- File all patient data upon receipt of the information.
- Create records for new patients and prepare file labels.
- Retrieve files for patients who have appointments scheduled.
- Deliver and pick up paper files as needed.
- Prepare filing statistics.
- Audit records for completeness.
- Respond to calls from individuals who have questions about medical records.
- Request additional information as needed for completing the medical record.
- Maintain paper back-up files for computerized systems.
- Photocopy records as needed for billing or legal procedures.
- Maintain the confidentiality of all records.

## Personal Qualities:

Medical records clerks must have the ability to work accurately and pay attention to detail. Strong organizational skills and an understanding of information storage and retrieval are important.

## Physical Requirements:

Working in medical records may require walking, lifting, bending, and reaching, as well as lifting and carrying files. If the medical record system is highly computerized, the work may involve sitting for long periods, which some individuals find tiring. Computer tasks can also result in back, neck, and eye strain, as well as repetitive motion injuries of the wrist, such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

## Educational Requirements:

There are no specific standard educational requirements for medical records clerks. While some employers offer on-the-job-training, most prefer to hire individuals who are either experienced or have a working knowledge of medical terminology, filing systems, and computers. A high school diploma or GED is usually required by the employer.

## Certification Requirements:

No licensing or certification is required.

### **Projected Outlook for this Career:**

Employment opportunities for medical records clerks are expected to grow. Increasing amounts of documentation are required to comply with the ever-expanding regulatory requirements imposed on health care facilities. The growth in employment is also the result of the increased use of medical services by America's aging population.

### **Salary Information:**

In 2003, the average annual salary for medical records clerks was \$24,673.

### **Career Ladders:**

Medical records clerks with additional education can become medical record technicians, registered health information technicians, or registered health information administrators. With experience and/or training, they can also become insurance coders.

### **To Learn More and Prepare:**

- Explore the Web Links provided in this profile.
- Conduct an informational interview or job shadow a medical records clerk.
- Obtain employment or a volunteer position in a health care facility.
- In high school, take biology, health, and computer courses.
- Contact your local community college or vocational school for classes in medical terminology and medical records.

### **Professional Organizations:**

There are no professional organizations for medical records clerks.

### **Web Links:**

The Real World: Hospital Medical Records Clerk

Scroll to the bottom section of this site and click on "Site Map." Scroll down once again until you see the box labeled "The Real World" and click on "Medical Records Clerk" to read the story of one person's experience as a medical records clerk.

<http://www.animatedsoftware.com/>

Jobvertise

Type in "Medical Records Clerk" and click on "Search Jobs" to review job listings by city and state.

<http://www.jobvertise.com/>

Bellingham Technical College: Medical Records Clerk

Click on tab "Degrees/Certificate Programs & Courses," followed by "Programs." Click on "Medical Records Clerk" to learn about the training offered at a representative college.

<http://www.beltc.ctc.edu/>

Jobs.com

Type in "Medical Records Clerk" and click on "Find Jobs. Job listings for medical records clerk.

<http://www.jobs.com/>

Medical Records Institute

This organization promotes electronic health care information.

<http://www.medrecinst.com>

Electronic Privacy Information Center

This is a public interest research center focused on protecting privacy.

Under "Policy Issues," click on "Privacy A to Z," and then "Medical Records."

<http://www.epic.org>