



Taos Medical Transcription Initiative (TMTI)

FINAL REPORT
Contract No. TT-09-198
Economic Development Services for the Town of Taos

Submitted to the
Town of Taos

June 30, 2009

by

Cecilia Ciepiela
Alex Barber
AISDevelopment, LLC
www.ais-development.com

in association with

Mark Lautman
Lautman Economic Architecture and Community Economics Lab

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	1
2. METHODOLOGY	1
3. THE CASE FOR A “LOCATION NEUTRAL” STRATEGY.....	2
4. THE CASE FOR MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION	3
5. THE MARKET OPPORTUNITY	4
5.1 National Market Overview	4
5.2 State of New Mexico MT Market	7
5.3 Local Taos MT Market	8
5.4 Industry Organizations	9
5.5 Issues and Trends.....	10
5.6 Potential Market Partnerships.....	11
6. THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE.....	12
6.1 National MT Training and Education Programs	12
6.2 Local Training and Education Assets for MT	12
6.3 Local Workforce Development Gaps.....	13
7. OUTREACH, ASSESSMENT, AND MANAGEMENT.....	15
7.1 Outreach	15
7.2 Recruitment, Screening and Hiring	16
8. SUPPORT PLATFORM	17
8.1 Services and Support	18
8.2 Third Places	19
9. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	20

TABLES

Table 1: Estimated Supply Gap for Medical Transcription (1999-2009)	6
Table 2: Use of MT Services by Major New Mexico Hospitals.....	7
Table 3: Taos Health Services Organizations.....	8

FIGURES

Figure 1: Supply and Demand for Medical Transcriptionists (1999 to 2009).....	6
Figure 2: Location of MT Work	7

ANNEXES

- Annex A: Contact List for Medical Transcription Initiative
- Annex B: Major National medical Transcription Companies and Their Hiring Standards
- Annex C: Major New Mexico Medical Transcription Companies and Their Hiring Standards
- Annex D: Medical Transcription Programs at Community Colleges and Universities
- Annex E: Medical Transcription Programs Available On Line
- Annex F: UNM-Taos Concept Paper for Developing and Upgrading a Medical Transcription Curriculum Aligned with Industry Standards
- Annex G: Holy Cross Hospital Concept Paper for Medical Transcription Externship Program
- Annex H: Third Place Evaluation Matrix

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AISDevelopment (AISD), a Taos-based international economic development consulting firm, was funded by the Town of Taos to design a pilot program that positions the local and regional community to capture business opportunity in the growing medical transcription market,^{*} by defining the market opportunity, leveraging local quality of life advantages, building workforce development alliances, and supporting a local culture of self-employment and entrepreneurship. The pilot, referred to herein as the **Taos Medical Transcription Initiative (TMTI)**, will lay the foundations for a broader strategy for attracting and supporting “location neutral” business opportunities to Taos that will increase the Town’s tax base, create quality economic base opportunities for local residents, build on existing business development programs, and improve the quality of life for Taos residents.

AISD identified the market and its requirements, assessed Taos’ current position and assets *vis a vis* that market, and designed a pilot program that leverages existing strengths and assets while addressing gaps and weaknesses in the ability of the community, individuals, and entrepreneurs to capture the market opportunity.

KEY FINDINGS. Key findings resulting from AISD’s research and analysis, which provide parameters for implementation of a pilot program in Taos, include:

- **Unmet demand for medical transcription services is substantially higher than supply.** The Bureau for Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates that MT jobs will continue to grow by 14% through 2016, a faster growth rate than the average rate for all other occupations.[†] The Medical Transcription Industry Association estimates that in 2009 the demand for MTs could be as high as 941,564 and the supply projected at only 73,755 (only 8% of demand).[‡] The majority of medical transcriptionists (MTs) work as remote workers from home (71.9%).
- **Wage potential is significant and is correlated with typing skills.** According to the Bureau for Labor Statistics, “Wage-and-salary medical transcriptionists had median hourly earnings of \$14.40 in May 2006. The middle 50 percent earned between \$12.17 and \$17.06. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$10.22, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$20.15.”[§] The average hourly wage in Taos is around \$13.50/hour, and the price per line ranges from \$.07 to \$.12. Speed and accuracy are directly correlated with income potential for MTs who are paid by the line
- **Strategic market partnerships with major MT market players will be critical to accurately assessing competitive requirements and industry trends and providing direct access to economic opportunity in the sector.** Partnerships with national MT service companies should focus first on workforce development; potential strategic partners will simply not come to the table until consistent quality results are demonstrated.
- **Taos may be too small a player for national MT service companies with which to engage.** A regional or state-wide initiative may make more sense to create a critical mass of supply of MTs that is more attractive to the large companies.

^{*} Keying medical voice files into a computer system to create hard copy records for patient files.

[†] Bureau for Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos271.htm>

[‡] MTIA 2000 Transcription Market Assessment, <http://mt.gowithitx.com/MedicalTranscriptionBusiness.html>

[§] Bureau for Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos271.htm>

- **The biggest gap in the local training opportunity is the lack of the “experiential” aspect of the training, and particularly experience in a hospital environment.** Even coming out of a formal training program, prospective MTs will find it hard to obtain paid work, despite soaring demand, without one to two years of actual experience under their belts specifically in an acute care or hospital environment. Workforce development, and specifically the “experiential” aspect of developing qualified MTs, is the *most critical and highest priority investment* that needs to be made. Without a supply of qualified MTs able to meet industry standards, a pilot program will not be successful, and could result in lost credibility that would be detrimental to future efforts.
- **Industry-recognized on line training programs are the least expensive and most accessible.** UNM-Taos believes that Career Step (www.careerstep.com) is the ideal program for students who want to become a medical transcriptionist, because it is fully accredited and recognized nationwide. To offer Career Step through UNM-Taos, however, would cost students fees of up to \$2,000, and it would take approximately 2 years to get the program approved through UNM. UNM-Taos' proposal, therefore, is to design a pathway through the Administrative Assistant program and promoting the of Career Step as an add-on extension. The potential need to find grant or subsidized loan resources to help individuals who may not be able to afford the online fees was identified.
- **Investment in a market-based model for recruitment, screening, hiring and managing of trained and qualified candidates will increase the likelihood of economic sustainability.** The development of a business model for a local remote worker-based MT services company that successfully can respond to market demand is critical. All of the potential MT market partners would work with a single local MT company that hires and manages a pool of remote workers, rather than contracting with and managing individual remote workers directly. Given the large unmet demand, a business driven approach has potential to be economically viable.
- **Third bedroom workers need a supportive business environment to succeed.** Support for a “third place” should be core element of a pilot, where third bedroom workers can access services and support on a shared basis at a cost they can afford and still be profitable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Phased approach to strategic market partnerships.** AISD recommends a phased approach to strategic partnership development. Phase I should be aimed at getting partners involved as advisors on the design of workforce development programs. Phase II would be aimed at developing specific agreements to link our MTs into their remote worker programs, preferably as part of the a state-wide initiative. AISD also recommends that partnership development efforts focus first on the firms that are already working in New Mexico and therefore are likely to have a stake in the development of the local MT supply.
- **Strategic investments in quality and accessibility of workforce development programs, including:**
 - Upgrading the existing MT course at UNM-Taos to comply with the AHDI Model Curriculum, including making the course format more “experiential”; adding skills development in other aspects of MT such as data quality and data management; adding modules on privacy and

HIPAA**; adding modules on MT-related business skills, such as negotiating transcription agreements.

- Promoting access to on-line training programs, possibly with educational grants.
 - Creating an internship or apprenticeship program to create opportunities for gaining professional experience.
 - Developing relevant skills and experience at an earlier stage by offering tailored technical and business education opportunities to high school students, and focusing on development of keyboarding skills at the middle school level.
- **Market based outreach, recruitment and management.** A pilot program would entail a targeted outreach effort, working in conjunction with the above organizations, to conduct a series of community seminars followed by more intensive recruitment and screening. AISD recommends a competed, performance-based contract to outsource the “hire, pay, manage” function to a qualified New Mexico MT company to implement a pilot
 - **A support platform addressing the needs of third bedroom workers.** Design a “shared services platform” that would bring together a package of core services that third bedroom workers can access for a fixed monthly fee (perhaps based on a membership model), combined with negotiated discounts with specific service providers who are interested in gaining access to a targeted “bulk” market for their services.
 - **A well coordinated public-private partnership based on clearly defined roles, responsibilities and commitments.** In general, we would view the appropriate role for the public sector to be creating the *enabling environment for private sector development*, through investments in workforce development and a business support platform. The management and sustainability of MT services involve core business functions best performed by a for-profit business, including hiring, managing, paying, quality control, market competitiveness, sustainability, and profitability.
 - **Both short and long term investments.** AISD recommends a short term (one year) pilot program to test the concept building on existing assets and programs, while investing in longer term services and infrastructure that will be required to increase the economic viability of MT, 3BR and location neutral businesses and their contribution to the growth of the local economy.
 - **Participation in a state-wide approach.** Given that there is no lack of demand for MT services, and that other regions in NM are interested in similar initiatives, a statewide approach may be called for, that allows for cost sharing and more effective leveraging of state resources particularly in the area of workforce development. Such an initiative is currently being developed by Lautman Economic Architecture and Community Economics Lab out of Albuquerque.

** The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act is a grouping of regulations that work to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in health care delivery and health insurance. The intention of the HIPAA is also to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the health care system, portability and continuity of health insurance coverage in the group and individual markets, as well as the ability to provide consequences to those that do not apply with the regulations explicitly stated within the Act.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AISDevelopment, LLC, wishes to acknowledge and thank all those who made valuable contributions of information, time and energy to this effort, especially the New Mexico medical transcription companies and specialists who were extremely informative and enthusiastic about the potential to grow the opportunity, as well as UNM-Taos and Holy Cross Hospital. Thanks to Alex Barber of AISDevelopment, who did the legwork on national, state and local markets and who facilitated working groups of local stakeholders aimed at developing alliances to underpin a future program. Special thanks to Mark Lautman for his contribution of knowledge, time and strategic guidance. Lastly, we thank the Town of Taos, and Matthew Spriggs, Director for Community and Economic Development, for the opportunity to explore this timely topic for the benefit of the Toas.

ABOUT AISDEVELOPMENT

AISDevelopment (AISD) is a small, woman-owned HUB Zone* company specializing in economic development, market-oriented small and medium enterprise (SME) development, and sustainable agribusiness with a focus on rural poverty alleviation and market development. AISD services are aimed at linking communities to markets to create economic and social opportunity, by leveraging private sector business models that integrate community development, competitiveness and sustainable use of natural resources.

AISD principals have worked in 40 countries, on over \$700 million in projects, with over 50 years of combined experience. AISD's management team combines commercial, consulting, public sector, donor, and civil society experience that inform AISD's integrated approaches to economic growth and development. AISD offers its partners and clients the flexibility and low overhead of a small business along with the assurance of high performance standards. AISD is headquartered in Taos, New Mexico.

AISD provides integrated services in three core, interrelated practice areas:

- **Economic Development.** AISD provides services to local, regional and national governments, and international donor organizations in economic development strategic planning, design and implementation, including conducting feasibility and value chain studies, identifying and leveraging financing, creating public-private partnerships, and facilitating community and stakeholder participation, communications and coordination.
- **Enterprise Development.** AISD provides innovative, market driven and practical solutions to delivering services to small and medium enterprises and linking them to markets.
- **Sustainable Agribusiness,** with a specialization in Aquaculture and Fisheries. AISD offers market driven solutions that balance the demands of economic growth and food security with sustainable resources management in agriculture and agribusiness.

Within these practice areas, AISD offers a range of cross cutting expertise that supports our integrated approach to economic growth and development:

- Competitiveness and Value Chain Development Strategies
- Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)
- Institutional Capacity Building
- Project Design, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Public Education
- Public-Private Alliance and Partnership Development

For more information, visit www.ais-development.com.

* Historically underutilized business (SBA).

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

AISDevelopment (AISD), a Taos-based international economic development consulting firm, has been funded by the Town of Taos to design a pilot program that positions the local and regional community to capture business opportunity in the growing medical transcription market,⁶ by defining the market opportunity, leveraging local quality of life advantages, building workforce development alliances, and supporting a local culture of self-employment and entrepreneurship. The pilot, referred to herein as the ***Taos Medical Transcription Initiative (TMTI)***, will lay the foundations for a broader strategy for attracting and supporting “location neutral” business opportunities to Taos that will increase the Town’s tax base, create quality economic base opportunities for local residents, build on existing business development programs, and improve the quality of life for Taos residents.

The following report presents the results of research and analysis, conclusions and recommendations for next steps, and a proposed implementation plan for a medical transcription pilot initiative.

2 METHODOLOGY

AISD’s approach is to identify the market and its requirements, assess Taos’ current position and assets *vis a vis* that market, and design a pilot program that leverages existing strengths and assets while addressing gaps and weaknesses in the ability of the community, individuals, and entrepreneurs to capture the market opportunity. To that end, AISD completed the following tasks:

1. Conducted market research to understand the current market, major players, and trends, and to identify potential strategic market partners to advise and partner with Taos on the design and implementation of a pilot program that responds competitively to market requirements.
2. Identified and evaluated local and state educational and training assets and facilitated an alliance to support a tailored work force development program that responds to market requirements.
3. Developed an outreach, assessment and management strategy and implementation plan to link prospective medical transcriptionists (MT) into existing opportunities.
4. Identified and evaluated local business support assets that could be packaged and tailored to support medical transcriptionist in particular, and location neutral businesses in general.

AISD conducted interviews and facilitated meetings with a wide range of stakeholders, including: local medical transcriptionists; national and state medical transcription companies; local community organizations, including Taos Education Fund (TEF), Taos Community Foundation (TCF) and Community Against Violence (CAV); Taos-based “location neutral” companies, including ACT and ZC Sterling; medical and health organizations, including Holy Cross Hospital, Taos Medical Group, Family Practice, Taos Clinic for Children and Youth, and Taos Orthopedic Institute; educational and workforce institutions including the University of New Mexico-Taos, Taos High School, Taos Middle School, the Department of Workforce Solutions, and a wide range of on line and on campus training and education programs; and, business support organizations and service companies, including the Taos Entrepreneurial Network (TEN), Taos County Chamber of Commerce (TCCC), Accion New

⁶ Keying medical voice files into a computer system to create hard copy records for patient files.

Mexico, CPA Southwest, Taos Mountain Electronics, Taos Pueblo Economic Development, and Kit Carson Electric. A list of all those we interviewed is provided in **Annex A**.

3 THE CASE FOR A “LOCATION NEUTRAL” STRATEGY

The Town of Taos has begun to explore a strategy that focuses on creating, retaining, expanding and attracting entrepreneurs and individuals who have or can establish “location neutral” businesses in Taos, who want to base (or stay) in Taos due to quality of life priorities. Location neutral businesses are firms that are not tied to a location by the need for physical infrastructure and/or other location specific requirements, but can be based anywhere and operate remotely through telecommunications. Location neutral businesses tend to serve external markets and therefore are often economic base businesses bringing new revenue into the community. They are not dependent on the size and nature of the local market or growth rate of the local economy.

The growing trend in “location neutral” businesses has been documented by Charles Grantham of Work Design in Prescott, AZ, who predicts that 40% of the workforce will be location neutral in 2021.⁷ A study by Routt County, Colorado, found that 10% of all households in the county are “location neutral” businesses, contributing annually \$35 million to the local economy and generating \$600,000 in sales tax revenue.⁸ This is a trend for which Taos can competitively position itself and from which it can benefit in the long term.

There are two elements of a proposed strategy:

1. *Attracting “location neutral” business people and entrepreneurs who can create or move their businesses to Taos (“talent attraction”).* This involves creative business attraction efforts targeting individuals and entrepreneurs with information and services to facilitate relocating their business or headquarters to Taos, perhaps piggybacking on tourism marketing efforts. We know anecdotally that visitors who arrive as tourists, often return as residents (though there is little data to measure the extent to which this happens). Real estate agents are often their first contact in this regard, as well as the Chamber of Commerce.

A formal strategy and program to capture this opportunity would require both marketing and service provision components (e.g., targeted business services, telecommunications services, workforce development), as well as identification and strengthening of key quality of life advantages of Taos to support “location neutral” businesses (e.g., community services, education, arts and culture, environment). A survey to identify the current baseline of location neutral businesses in Taos and their contribution to the local economy would provide the data to develop a targeted strategy and to measure the impact of a programmatic effort to promote location neutral businesses. Examples of the kinds of business that could be based in Taos and operate remotely include professional services, such as legal, accounting, finance, engineering, trade, and consulting, or headquarters or back office operations for businesses with sites in other locations.

2. *Attracting “location neutral” market opportunities to Taos that local entrepreneurs and individuals can take advantage of to create economic opportunity and jobs in Taos (“market attraction”).* This

⁷ Michelle Conlin, Business Week Online, *The Easiest Commute of All*, December 12, 2005.

http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_50/b3963137.htm

⁸ Routt County Economic Development Cooperative (RCEDC), *Location Neutral Businesses: Survey Results*, March 2006, <http://yampavalley.info/business3563399.asp>

involves identifying specific market opportunities and providing services and information tailored to assist local individuals and businesses to access them (e.g., outreach, training, etc.). In this category, the focus tends to be on what has been referred to variously as “third bedroom workers,” “remote workers,” telecommuters, or free agents, among other things, all of which refer to individuals who work for themselves out of their homes. In essence, these individuals are sole proprietors of their own businesses, contracting services out to a larger company, working from their homes. These businesses represent economic base jobs that do not depend on the local market to survive, and that bring revenue into the local economy.

In this report, we will use the terms “remote workers” or “third bedroom workers” (or 3BR). In addition to medical transcription, which is the focus of this report, examples of the kinds of work that people do from home working for remote clients include:

- Customer service, www.aplineaccess.com⁹
- Online teaching by certified teachers, www.sylvan.com
- Logo and graphic design, www.logoworks.com
- Web design, software development www.oDesk.com
- Transcription (not medical) www.workingsolutions.com
- Language training, www.languagelab.com (demand is for English speakers)
- Language translation, numerous
- Virtual administrative assistant, www.hiremymom.com

4 THE CASE FOR MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION

While the opportunities are wide ranging and growing, AISD proposed to focus on the medical transcription market in order to test the remote worker/3BR concept, because we believe the chances of success are high based on the following factors:

- In the context of the current recession, the health sector is one of the only sectors that is growing and currently adding jobs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the change in employment for healthcare was the highest of all sectors, at 10.4%, followed by Personal Care and Service at positive 4.5%. Most sectors were negative in 2008.¹⁰
- Within the health sector, there is unmet demand for medical transcription services, which is substantially higher than supply (as detailed below).
- The Obama administration’s stimulus package provides \$19 billion to support Health Information Technology Systems, which may generate an increase in demand for medical transcription expertise.¹¹

⁹ Lautman Economic Architecture and Community Economics Lab is currently exploring a state-wide initiative with Alpine Access.

¹⁰ Bureau for Labor Statistics

¹¹ The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will invest \$19 billion, of which \$17 billion will be put towards aiding physicians and medical facilities in purchasing and implementing the new Health Information Technology (HIT) system over the course of the next five years, and \$2 billion to invest in the health information technology infrastructure. It provides financial incentives to hospitals, physicians, rural health clinics, and federally qualified health centers in the adoption and use of the healthcare reform system. The development of HIT will create uniform electronic standards and will allow communication and information to flow between

- Medical transcription is an industry that has already developed experience and business models based on outsourcing to remote home-based workers.
- Medical transcription is ideal for small rural communities, because the opportunity is not limited to what is available in the local—or even regional or state—markets.
- The opportunity is consistent with UNM-Taos’ strategic priorities and can be supported through existing programs as well as new investments that the university is making in developing health related programs and curricula.
- The nature of the work suits the local work culture, in which individuals often work more than one job and rarely in strictly 9 to 5 jobs.
- The concept is not an employment-based model, and, therefore, avoids the need to deal with challenging personnel issues (e.g., timeliness, drug tests, etc.). A quality control program and standards certainly will be necessary, but opportunity and income potential are based on objective individual performance.
- The specificity and clarity of the opportunity provide a focus around which to rally the various actors and funders, while putting in place the infrastructure to support any type of location neutral or 3BR opportunity.
- Medical transcriptionists (MTs) represent a new category of local green jobs due to the low environmental impact of the work.
- Last, but not least, the opportunity is consistent with the priority objectives of the Town of Taos to develop both the health and education sectors as centers of excellence in New Mexico.

5 THE MARKET OPPORTUNITY

5.6 National Market Overview

Market size: Based on a market assessment in 2000,¹² the Medical Transcription Industry Association (MTIA) estimated the MT market at \$10.6 billion, with estimated annual growth of 10% per year. AISD has found more recent market estimates that range up to \$20 billion (which is consistent with a 10% growth rate).

Supply: The sector is comprised of hundreds of small firms, with a number of very large national firms. Many small clinical practices do their transcription in house, but hospitals tend to outsource to the large transcription companies. **Annex B** provides a matrix of some of the major medical transcription companies, their services, pay, employment requirements, whether they hire remote workers and whether they are currently hiring.

authorized medical systems. In order to help implement the new technology, each state or state designed entity may have the opportunity of obtaining grants for HIT expansion assistance. The main function of these grants is to increase the development the HIT infrastructure that will support the nationwide electronic exchange of healthcare information, and to establish training programs for those involved in the healthcare industry.

¹² MTA 2000 Transcription Market Assessment.

MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION: NATURE OF THE WORK

Medical transcriptionists listen to dictated recordings made by physicians and other health care professionals and transcribe them into medical reports, correspondence, and other administrative material. They generally listen to recordings on a headset, using a foot pedal to pause the recording when necessary, and key the text into a personal computer or word processor, editing as necessary for grammar and clarity. The documents they produce include discharge summaries, medical history and physical examination reports, operative reports, consultation reports, autopsy reports, diagnostic imaging studies, progress notes, and referral letters. Medical transcriptionists return transcribed documents to the physicians or other health care professionals who dictated them for review and signature or correction. These documents eventually become part of patients' permanent files.

To understand and accurately transcribe dictated reports, medical transcriptionists must understand medical terminology, anatomy and physiology, diagnostic procedures, pharmacology, and treatment assessments. They also must be able to translate medical jargon and abbreviations into their expanded forms. To help identify terms appropriately, transcriptionists refer to standard medical reference materials—both printed and electronic; some of these are available over the Internet. Medical transcriptionists must comply with specific standards that apply to the style of medical records and to the legal and ethical requirements for keeping patient information confidential.

Experienced transcriptionists spot mistakes or inconsistencies in a medical report and check to correct the information. Their ability to understand and correctly transcribe patient assessments and treatments reduces the chance of patients receiving ineffective or even harmful treatments and ensures high-quality patient care.

Currently, most health care providers transmit dictation to medical transcriptionists using either digital or analog dictating equipment. The Internet has grown to be a popular mode for transmitting documentation. Many transcriptionists receive dictation over the Internet and are able to quickly return transcribed documents to clients for approval. Another increasingly popular method uses speech recognition technology, which electronically translates sound into text and creates drafts of reports. Transcriptionists then format the reports; edit them for mistakes in translation, punctuation, or grammar; and check for consistency and any wording that doesn't make sense medically. Transcriptionists working in specialties, such as radiology or pathology, with standardized terminology are more likely to use speech recognition technology. However, speech recognition technology will become more widespread in all specialties as the technology becomes more sophisticated, that is, better able to recognize and more accurately transcribe diverse modes of speech.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition

Demand: Despite the growth of the industry and steadily increasing demand for medical transcription services, the number of MTs in the US has decreased over the last 10 years. The Bureau for Labor Statistics (BLS) estimates that MT jobs will continue to grow by 14% through 2016, a faster growth rate than the average rate for all other occupations.¹³ In 2006, BLS estimated that there were 98,000 MT jobs, with 41% in hospitals and 29% in private practices.¹⁴ Note, however, that BLS estimates only include full time employees and do not take into account the majority of MTs work as independent contactors from home, which means that the actual number is significantly higher. Due to the widening gap between growing demand and shrinking supply, US companies have outsourced to India, Pakistan and the Philippines where labor is cheaper.

¹³ Bureau for Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos271.htm>

¹⁴ Bureau for Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos271.htm>

The MTIA market assessment study projected the growing gap between demand for MTs and shrinking supply, a small portion of which is being filled by outsourcing overseas, concluding that in 2009 the demand for MTs could be as high as 941,564 and the supply projected at only 73,755 (only 8% of demand).¹⁵ Table 1 provides the MTIA data.

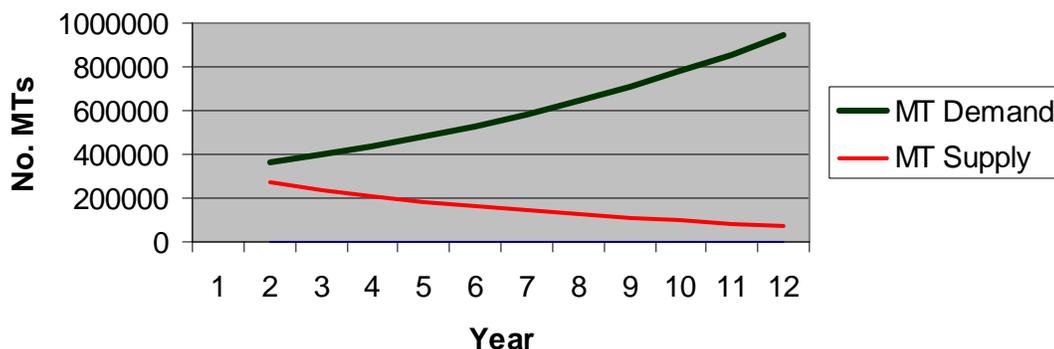
Table 1: Estimated Supply Gap for Medical Transcription (1999-2009)

Year	Total Lines (Billions)	MT Value (US\$B)	MT Required	MT Supply	Gap
1999	132.5	10.5	363,014	270,000	93,014
2000	145.7	11.7	399,315	237,141	162,174
2001	160.3	12.8	439,247	208,281	230,966
2002	176.4	14.1	483,171	182,933	300,238
2003	193.9	15.5	531,488	160,670	370,818
2004	213.4	17.1	584,637	141,117	443,460
2005	234.7	18.8	643,101	123,943	519,158
2006	258.2	20.7	707,411	108,859	598,552
2007	284.0	22.7	778,152	95,611	682,541
2008	312.4	25.1	855,967	83,975	771,992
2009	343.6	27.5	941,564	73,755	868,809

Source: MTIA

Figure 1 plots the data on a graph showing the wide divergence between supply and demand for MT services.

Figure 1: Supply and Demand of Medical Transcriptionists, 1999 to 2009



Wages: According to the Bureau for Labor Statistics, “Wage-and-salary medical transcriptionists had median hourly earnings of \$14.40 in May 2006. The middle 50 percent earned between \$12.17 and \$17.06. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$10.22, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$20.15.”¹⁶ The average hourly wage in Taos is around \$13.50/hour, and the price per line ranges from \$.07 to \$.12.

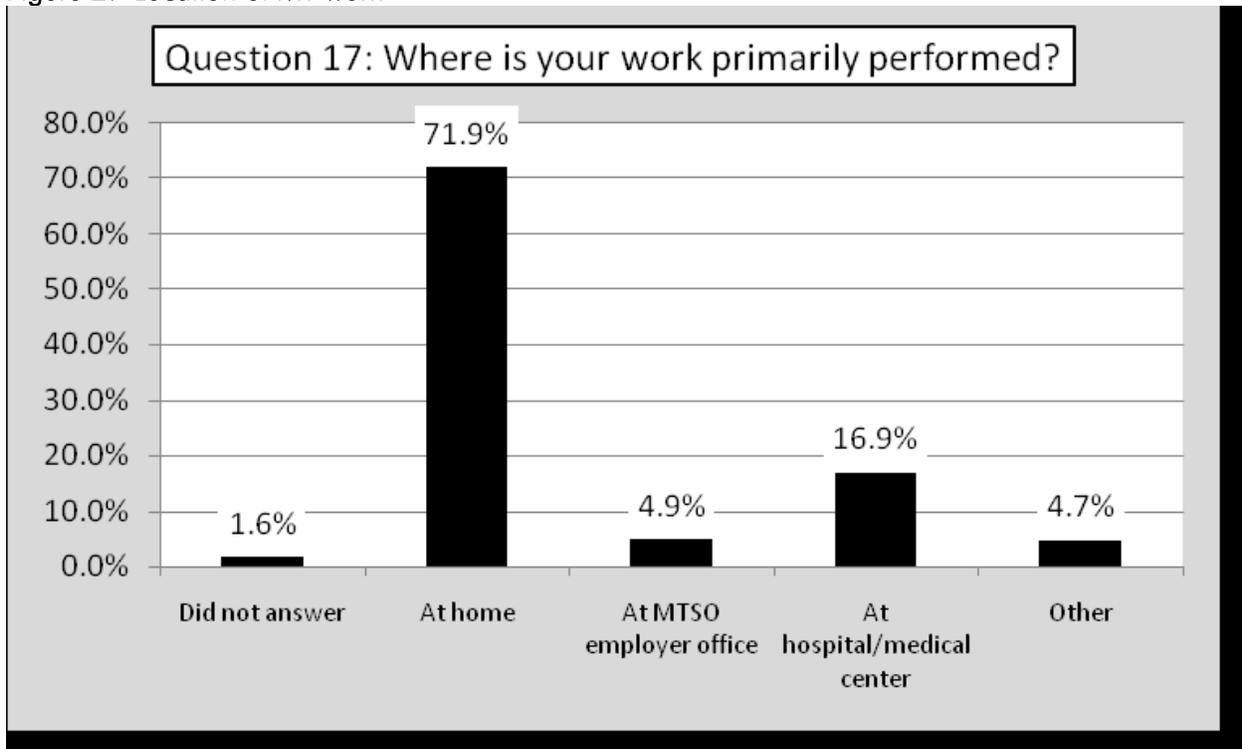
¹⁵ MTIA 2000 Transcription Market Assessment, <http://mt.gowithitx.com/MedicalTranscriptionBuisness.html>

¹⁶ Bureau for Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos271.htm>

Hours worked: MTs do not necessarily work full time, in fact, we were told frequently that eye strain, problems with concentration, and physical discomfort prevented working more than several hours at a time, with 5 hours being the upper limit for one sitting.

Location of work: Based on a survey conducted by the MTIA, medical transcriptionists work primarily from home (71.9%). The same study estimated that about 40% work as employees for healthcare institutions, while 25% work as independent contractors to medical transcription service organizations and 24% work as employees of medical transcription service organizations.¹⁷

Figure 2: Location of MT work



Source: MTIA

Profile: Information on the demographic profiles of MTs was difficult to find, however, anecdotal feedback indicated that women tended to be the majority of MTs, and that single mothers were strongly represented in the MT population.

5.6 State of New Mexico MT Market

On the demand side, AISD contacted the four major New Mexico hospitals to identify how they currently meet their MT needs. Almost all use national MT service companies, except UNM Hospital, which hires local full time employees. One, Presbyterian, uses a local MT company, in addition to a national MT company. None use independent remote workers.

¹⁷ 2007 Survey of Medical Transcriptionists, Bentley College Healthcare Documentation Production Project <http://www.ahdionline.org/scriptcontent/downloads/MTSurveyReport-Preliminary.pdf>

Table 2: Use of MT Services by Major New Mexico Hospitals

Hospital	Location	Use of National Transcription Company	Location of Company	Use of Local Transcription Services	Use of Independent Contractors
Lovelace	ABQ	Focus Informatics 781-565-5000	Boston, MA	No	No
		Superior Global Solutions 1-800-270-4982	Plano, TX		
Presbyterian	ABQ	Webmatics	N/A	SNM Transcription	No
St. Vincent	SF	Transcend 1-800-555-8727 1-678-808-0614	Atlanta, GA	No	No
UNM Hospital	ABQ	No		Handled only by UNM MT employees	No

On the supply side, AISD conducted a survey of New Mexico MT companies, a summary of which is provided in **Annex C**. We identified five MT service companies, four of which hire independent remote workers (one company did not provide information). The prior experience requirements range from 2 to 10 years of experience. It was understandably difficult to obtain information on the client base for these firms, but we surmise that they serve mainly local clinical practices.

5.6 Taos MT Market

On the demand side, AISD contacted the key health services organizations in Taos to identify how they meet their MT services needs. Holy Cross Hospital has two full time MTs who work at the hospital as employees and one full time remote worker based in Penasco. All are paid by the hour. The hospital also contracts with Medquist, one of the large national MT companies, which provides additional transcription capacity (about 15 reports a day) and proprietary online software used by the onsite and offsite MTs. These MTs do not have any formal MT training or certifications, but through work in the hospital environment were familiar with the terminology and health record content and requirements. Two said they had taken Tillie Valdez’s keyboarding classes in high school, which directly benefitted them in their jobs. **Table 3** summarizes current supply and demand in the local Taos market. Local clinics use a combination of employees, independent contractors, and state MT service companies.

Table 3: Taos Health Services Organizations

Hospital/Medical Practice	Use of National Transcription Company	Use of Local Transcription Services
Family Practice	No	Stat IQ (Albuquerque)
Holy Cross Hospital	Medquist, Mount Laurel, NJ	Two Holy Cross Hospital in-house MT employees and one remote worker in Penasco handle some of the medical transcription, the rest is sent to Medquist
Taos Clinic for Children and Youth	No	The doctors handle medical transcription in-house by using the Office Practicum EMR software system
Taos Medical Group	No	Two local home-based independent contractors working part-time with additional support from Santa Fe-based Younique Transcription.
Taos Orthopedic Institute	No	Employs one in-house medical transcriptionist who is fully certified

Again, given the small size of the local market for MT services, as outlined above, the aim is not to target these local organizations for jobs, but to tap into the broader national markets where demand is unmet and MT services are in short supply. These local partners, however, provide a valuable resource in terms of experience, standards, internships and trainers, and development of partnerships with these organizations will be critical to a sustainable and viable local MT industry development effort.

On the supply side, AISD's research identified a handful of local MTs providing direct services to the local hospital and to small local practices (either as employees or as independent contractors), but no Taos-based MT firms. AISD's efforts to identify local MTs was not comprehensive and a targeted outreach effort (discussed below) is necessary to identify local experienced MTs as well as individuals interested in becoming MTs.

5.6 Industry Organizations

A professional and an industry association represent, respectively, the interests of and set standards for medical transcriptionists and medical transcription companies:

- **Association for Health Documentation Integrity (AHD)** www.ahdi.org. Formerly the American Association for Medical Transcription (AAMT), the Association for Health Documentation Integrity (AHD) was created to establish a complete set of standards that would enforce the highest quality level, protect privacy, and help to ensure the security of health information. AHD emphasizes that the consistency and accuracy are critical in patient safety, and proper training is essential to the medical industry in identifying and preventing medical errors. AHD provides its members and those interested in medical transcription, an insight to the industry and supplies a step by step guide on how to properly enter the highly demanded profession. AHD describes in detail what a medical transcriptionist does, what skills are required, how to choose the best school based on specific criteria, and supplies the list of all AHD approved schools. AHD evaluates and approves MT education programs based on their conformance with AHD's Model Curriculum, availability of financial resources, and demonstrated performance on placement. The New Mexico chapter of AHD has about 45 members, however, due to low participation, they are considering merging into a regional chapter with Arizona and Colorado.
- **Medical Transcription Industry Association (MTIA)** www.mtia.org. The Medical Transcription Industry Association (MTIA) was formed in 1993 by approximately 100 transcription companies both large and small, to establish an organization based around the needs of medical transcription business owners rather than individual transcriptionists. The primary focus of the association is to promote superior standards for MT service companies throughout the industry and to provide a means of information distribution. MTIA partners with other medical transcription on the development of the best practice standards for healthcare documentation. In 2007, MTIA and AHIMA produced and released the Standard Unit of Measure for Transcribed Reports, which ultimately proposed that the visible black character (VBC) become the new standard unit of measure for medical transcription over the previous 65 character line standard. The new VBC standard only accounts for characters that are visible, so doctors and physician offices are not charged for spaces or hidden formatting instructions, such as underlined and bold text in the total character count. The members of MTIA employ approximately 12,000 medical transcriptionists, and MTIA has an annual membership increase of 15%. MTIA's mission is to continue to be an active advocate for the transcription outsourcing industry and create

professional development opportunities for all medical transcription businesses. MTIA also sponsors an apprenticeship program, discussed in more detail below in Section 6.3

Three other organizations promote best practices and standards in health information management:

- **American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA)** www.ahima.org. The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) was founded in 1923 and was established to manage and ensure the security and proper oversight of health records.
- **Health Level Seven (HL7)** www.hl7.org. Health Level Seven is part of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and is a standard for exchanging information between medical applications.
- **American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM)** www.astm.org. The American Society for Testing Materials is one of the largest voluntary standards development organizations in the world, for technical standards for materials, products, systems, and services. ASTM Committee E31.22 on Healthcare Informatics develops standards related to the content, storage, security, confidentiality, and communication of information used within healthcare and healthcare decision making, including patient-specific information and knowledge.

5.5 Issues and Trends

A number of industry trends have caused concern about long term relevance of the intermediary “scribe” role played by MTs.

- **Outsourcing.** Currently, only 2% of medical transcription is outsourced, mostly to India. Given the gap in available MTs, this is likely to increase, though the trend will be limited by US government restrictions on federally funded institutions, who cannot outsource MT outside the US.
- **Voice recognition technology.** Improving voice recognition technology has replaced some MT, but, by and large, the technology remains problematic and an intermediary role in correcting and verifying results will continue to be needed. Many in the industry do not feel that the technology is in danger of completely replacing the need for MTs. In fact, according to the BLS, “Contracting our transcription work overseas and advancements in speech recognition technology are not expected to significantly reduce the need for well-trained medical transcriptionists.”¹⁸
- **Electronic Health Records.** The MT industry appears to be most concerned about the increased use of Electronic Health Records (EHR), primarily because the conversion to fully electronic files input directly by physicians may reduce the need for third party transcription (e.g., the “scribe”). The investment represented by the Obama stimulus package will accelerate conversion to EHR that could have an impact on the long term prospects for MT services. MT services have been primarily employed to create hard copy records, and the electronic files created by MTs are usually erased for privacy reasons. Organizations like AHDI are following trends in this area and are trying to get ahead of the curve by creating new competencies for MTs in data quality and data management.¹⁹

¹⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-09 Edition.

¹⁹ American Health Information Management Association, *Scenarios and Solutions for the Future of Transcription*, April 2005

5.6 Potential Market Partnerships

During the market research effort, AISD focused on identifying potential strategic market partners who might be interested in participating in the TMTI, with the aim of linking market demand directly into the program. From these discussions we identified a set of parameters and guidelines for the development of strategic market partnerships, including:

- No company we spoke to was willing to commit to a partnership until the availability of a qualified pool of experienced “hire-able” MTs and a sustainable training program is demonstrated.
- All of the potential partners we talked with were more interested in working with a single local MT company that hires and manages a pool of remote workers, rather than contracting with and managing a pool of individual remote workers directly.
- The main clients of the national companies are hospitals; therefore, the requirement for at least 2 years of experience in a hospital or “acute care” environment is non-negotiable. Part of the reason for this is that the needs of large hospitals are more challenging, including higher volumes, quicker turnaround times, a wider range of doctors with different backgrounds and foreign accents, and a wide array of technical specialties and terminology, among other things. These companies also work with smaller private practices, and can start MTs at that level, but their “bread and butter” is the large hospitals, which represent the greatest demand for MTs.
- In the course of our discussions, we also found that Taos is not the only locale seeking partnerships with these firms. In that context, Taos’ ability to compete with other regions will hinge on the quality and quantity of qualified MTs it produces, which in turn depends on the quality of its investments in workforce development and a supportive business environment. At the same time, it is possible that Taos may just be too small a player for these national companies with which to engage. A regional or state-wide initiative may make more sense to create a critical mass of supply of MTs that is more attractive to the large companies.

With these parameters in mind, AISD recommends a phased approach to strategic partnership development. Phase I should be aimed at getting partners involved as advisors on the design of workforce development programs. Phase II would be aimed at developing specific agreements to link our MTs into their remote worker programs, preferably as part of the a state-wide initiative. AISD also recommends that partnership development efforts focus first on the firms that are already working in New Mexico and therefore are likely to have a stake in the development of the local MT supply.

AISD identified several firms that were willing to entertain MT partnerships, including:

- **Medquist.** Medquist, based in New Jersey, currently provides MT services to Holy Cross Hospital in Taos. They have been open to discussing a partnership, but informed us that they have been approached by several entities seeking similar partnerships. Therefore, they are putting on hold any initiatives, until they determine their best interests and strategy for engaging in such partnerships.
- **Professional Transcription Company (PTC).** PTC is a national MT services company based in New York, which hires remote workers and outsources some work overseas. Their clients are mainly large hospitals. They were interested in the initiative, and were willing to participate to advise us

on workforce development, but were hesitant to make more formal commitments to partnerships without evidence of a real program and quality workforce in place. They also viewed engagement in a partnership as a business opportunity, to identify potential customers in New Mexico.

Developing these market partnerships will be critical to success of TMTI, but will require significant effort over time. Regardless, we believe, based on our discussions, that there is interest among some of the national companies. That said, in order to position Taos to develop these partnerships, and to compete with other regions, the primary focus of a strategy needs to be on workforce development investments.

6 THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE

To date, no formal training, education and/or certification is **required** to be an MT. Based on online research and interviews with large medical transcription companies, the most important qualification they seek is **experience**, primarily in a hospital or “acute care” environment; experience in clinics was generally not considered adequate. Training and certifications are valuable, but even with formal training, some degree of actual experience is usually required, from 1 to 2 years. Regardless of training or experience, most companies require the prospective MT to pass an exam testing their speed, accuracy and knowledge of medical terminology.

6.1 National MT Training and Education Programs

A wide range of MT training and education programs are available through universities and private training organizations, both on campus and online. **Annex D** presents a list of campus-based programs and **Annex E** presents a list of online programs. The estimated time for completion, cost, and degree level achieved vary widely. It was not possible to evaluate each program to identify what the best value might be for local Taos candidates, but we concluded that:

- The most valuable programs are those recognized by industry, which are generally those approved by AHDI; and
- Online programs are cheaper and easier to access because they do not require physical presence and can be done on a time schedule suitable for the participant.

6.2 Local Training and Education Assets for MT

AISD met with UNM-Taos, Taos High School, and Taos Middle School to identify and evaluate the baseline education and training programs available to support MT workforce development.

UNM-Taos. UNM-Taos offers a machine transcription course as part of the Administrative Assistant program, which includes several classes on medical transcription. The class is fully subscribed this semester, offering a cadre of students (approximately 20 enrolled) who will have some degree of transcription training at the end of the Spring 2009 semester. The course includes classroom practice with transcription machines. Informal feedback from one of the large national companies, however, indicated that while a good start, the program would need significant upgrading to address current industry needs and standards, as well as a more relevant experiential-based pedagogy specifically with medical transcription.

Given the availability of industry-recognized on-line training programs and certifications, AISD and UNM-Taos explored the possibility of offering students access to more affordable and time-flexible on-line courses, while developing UNM-Taos' MT and health care related programs to meet industry standards. UNM-Taos believes that Career Step (www.careerstep.com) is the ideal program for students who want to become a medical transcriptionist, because it is fully accredited and recognized nationwide. To offer Career Step through UNM-Taos, however, would cost students fees of up to \$2,000, and it would take approximately 2 years to get the program approved through UNM. UNM-Taos' proposal (provided in **Annex F**), therefore, is to design a pathway through the Administrative Assistant program and promoting the of Career Step as an add-on extension. We discussed the potential need to find grant or subsidized loan resources to help individuals who may not be able to afford the online fees.

UNM-Taos also mentioned the possibility of partnering with the Town of Taos to apply for grant resources to establish a room/location where students who are enrolled in Career Step can come and use the computers and get help from a facilitator and/or mentor medical transcriptionists.

Taos High School. The high school offers a range of elective courses that could be, formally or informally, developed into a "track" into the UNM-Taos biomedical transcription course offering. The biggest obstacle that must be addressed, however, is poor keyboarding skills and lack of interest by students in acquiring them. Speed and accuracy, however, are directly correlated with income potential for MTs, who are paid by the line. We discussed designing a track that starts with keyboarding in middle school, so that students entering high school can maximize the benefit of computer-based elective courses that lead to the UNM course as well as other specific job and career opportunities. The resources available to do this at the secondary school level do not exist and the effort to develop a program will inevitably represent a long term effort that is not possible to address under a one year pilot program. The Taos Education Fund, however, expressed their openness to considering future funding to support development of secondary school-based programs that will help youth interested in growing 3BR and location neutral business opportunities.

Local MTs. AISD also identified as a valuable asset a small number of individuals based in Taos who are currently doing medical transcription, including employees of local medical entities as well as home-based workers with remote clients (contacts are provide in Annex A). This small group was highly motivated to participate in any future efforts by contributing their knowledge and experience to program development, as well as serving as trainers and trainers of trainers.

6.3 Local Workforce Development Gaps

The biggest gap in the local training opportunity is the lack of the "experiential" aspect of the training, and particularly experience in a hospital environment. Again, even coming out of a formal training program, prospective MTs will find it hard to obtain paid work, despite soaring demand, without one to two years of actual experience under their belts specifically in an acute care or hospital environment. It is the classic chicken and egg challenge for new career entrants: you need the experience to get the job, but you need the job to get the experience. This will be the overwhelmingly most important and most difficult aspect of a pilot and long term program to address in a small rural community. But development of and investment in experiential opportunities, such as internships and apprenticeships, must come first; without this priority investment other aspects of a prospective MT program will not have the desired results.

AISD identified two opportunities to provide students with access to acute care experience:

- **Holy Cross Hospital Transcription Partnership.** AISD explored this challenge with UNM-Taos and Holy Cross Hospital in a series of meetings conducted in February and March, resulting in an agreement to partner and seek funding for development of an externship program at Holy Cross Hospital. **Annex G** provides a brief concept paper developed by Holy Cross Hospital to begin to seek funding. The Health Information Management Department (Medical Records) at Holy Cross Hospital would serve as an externship site. The students would receive hands on dictation from Radiologists, Pathologists, Internal Medicine and Surgeons. The different work types and styles of reports would prepare the students for an entry level position upon graduation. Experienced Medical Transcriptionists would be available to mentor the students during the externship. The students would be exposed to the Health Information Management Department and how transcribed documents are incorporated into the Medical Record. A maximum of two students would be completing their externship at a time.
- **AHDI/MTIA Registered Apprenticeship.** Once UNM-Taos’s curriculum gains AHDI approval, its graduates, and those completing AHDI approved training programs, will be eligible to participate in the AHDI/MTIA Registered Apprenticeship program. “This program pairs recent transcription graduates with employers that provide additional on-the-job training and education to transcriptionists. Employers gain access to qualified employees while apprentices achieve acute care experience.”²⁰ The program is broken down into five periods lasting four to six months, totaling approximately two years and includes over 4,000 hours of medical experience.

Enrollment into the apprenticeship program requires prior completion of an approved medical transcription program in addition to obtaining a Registered Medical Transcription certificate. If a student has not acquired their RMT, AHDI offers a credentialing exam online. Other prerequisites require that all applicants be at least 18 years old and must have received a high school diploma or GED equivalent.

Once accepted into the program, the apprentices are then paid an hourly wage that increases periodically throughout the program. The schedule of wages is divided into six periods. Each apprentice begins the program at a wage of \$7.50, which increases to \$9.75 by the 4th period, and ending at \$12.00 upon graduation. Before completion of each stage of the wage schedule, the transcriptionist must be evaluated by the employer and prove that their work is of consistent quality. Program apprentices work directly with employers who are members of MTIA while gaining hospital based dictation experience. All apprentices receive thorough training in the areas of acute care reports, operating reports, consultations, history and physicals, and discharge summaries.

In sum, in order to make the Taos MT training and education offering more responsive to the market, and to ensure that participants who invest time and money in developing the opportunity for themselves, investment is needed in the following areas:

- Upgrading the existing MT course at UNM-Taos to comply with the AHDI Model Curriculum, including making the course format more “experiential”; adding skills development in other aspects of MT such as data quality and data management; adding modules on privacy and

²⁰ MTIA Registered Apprenticeship in Medical Transcription, Starter Kit, <http://www.mtia.com/WorkforceDev.cfm>

HIPAA²¹; adding modules on MT-related business skills, such as negotiating transcription agreements.

- Promoting access to on-line training programs, possibly with educational grants.
- Creating an internship or apprenticeship program to create opportunities for gaining professional experience.
- Developing relevant skills and experience at an earlier stage by offering tailored technical and business education opportunities to high school students, and focusing on development of keyboarding skills at the middle school level.

7 OUTREACH, ASSESSMENT, AND MANAGEMENT

7.1 Outreach

In order to provide the basis for a pilot program as well as long term viability of TMTI, an outreach effort is necessary to identify the population that would be able, willing and interested in pursuing this kind of opportunity. Therefore, AISD identified existing resources and networks within the community that could participate in raising awareness about the potential for MT as well as other 3BR and location neutral market opportunities and identifying potential participants:

- **Taos Entrepreneurial Network (TEN).** TEN is uniquely positioned to provide information to the community through its network among businesses and prospective entrepreneurs.
- **Taos County Chamber of Commerce.** The Chamber could play a role in this effort because of the potential new membership base represented by 3BR for which tailored services could be designed.
- **Department of Workforce Solutions.** While the director told us that, by definition, this kind of opportunity did not align with their mission to match local employers with local job seekers, they recognized the value of the MT opportunity and offered their outreach mechanisms to provide information to their constituents (website, radio spots, flyers, and other outreach vehicles).
- **Other Community Organizations.** We also spoke with representatives of community organizations that have strong networks into the community and with specific target interest groups (e.g, women, youth), including the Community Against Violence (CAV), Taos Community Foundation (TCF) and the Taos Education Fund (TEF). The CAV was particularly interested in the training opportunity the initiative may offer for their clients. As discussed above, the TEF would be open to developing a long term role in supporting development of training and education programs at the secondary school level for location neutral opportunities.
- **Local media outlets,** such as KTAO, Taos News, etc.

²¹ The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act is a grouping of regulations that work to combat waste, fraud, and abuse in health care delivery and health insurance. The intention of the HIPAA is also to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the health care system, portability and continuity of health insurance coverage in the group and individual markets, as well as the ability to provide consequences to those that do not apply with the regulations explicitly stated within the Act.

A pilot program would entail a targeted outreach effort, working in conjunction with the above organizations, to conduct a series of community seminars followed by more intensive recruitment and screening. Based on formal and informal meetings during the course of this effort, AISD found substantial interest in the opportunity and believes that an effective outreach effort would generate a critical mass of potential candidates for a pilot program.

7.2 Recruitment, Screening and Hiring

Perhaps the most labor intensive element of the pilot program—and the most important to success after workforce development—will be the actual recruitment, screening, hiring and managing of trained and qualified candidates. This component will result in the development of a business model for a remote worker-based MT services company that successfully can respond to market demand. Performing this function effectively requires substantial prior experience in the MT industry; the ability to effectively assess a candidate’s qualifications based on knowledge of client requirements; knowledge of and networks into existing training and apprenticeship programs and industry organizations; capacity to manage remote workers; and the ability to manage client MT contracts. In the context of business models that use remote workers, we have seen this function referred to as the “hire, manage, pay” model. These are by nature business functions and, therefore, the focus is on a for-profit business model rather than a non-profit community service model.

At the same time, as discussed above, several of the potential strategic partners we spoke with would be willing to consider partnering with a local MT company that does the screening, hiring and quality management of independent home based MTs, but would not hire a large number of individuals directly. In any case, we believe this model is appropriate for the Taos context, due to the anticipated need for significant local management and quality control.

These factors lead us to conclude that a private market-based model, under which the function is outsourced to a qualified existing MT firm, is the most viable strategy for providing that service in the short run and for sustaining it in the long run. Since there are no experienced Taos-based MT firms, we recommend a competed, performance-based contract to outsource the function to a qualified New Mexico MT company to implement the pilot. Since these firms will be best positioned to determine their own capacity and approach to providing the service, we have not pre-determined the structure of a sustainable model. Rather, a proposed competed RFP should solicit proposals from candidate MT service firms on how they would provide the service sustainably, their staffing, qualifications, and corporate experience for implementing such a program, and a plan for continuing to operate commercially after the end of the formal contract.

In effect, the contract awardee would be the first entrant into the local market, with the incentive provided by the contract, in addition to public support for workforce development, business support platform and strategic partnership linkages. At the end of the pilot, the town and the contractor would evaluate the success of the pilot to transition the model to a completely commercial basis, without substantial additional resource devoted to the “hire, manage, pay” function, so that more resources can be directed toward the longer term investments that make the endeavor more competitive and sustainable.

In the long run, while the sustainability of the “hire, manage, pay” model will be tested under the pilot, it will be the long term investments that the town makes to improve the competitiveness of the community in terms of partnerships, training, education and support for MT and 3BR businesses that will ensure continued and expanded opportunity.

8 THE SUPPORT PLATFORM

In order to design an appropriate support platform tailored to the needs of third bedroom workers, AISD identified the specific challenges and needs of those working from home, including:

- **Lack of social interaction and networking.** Working from home is a solitary activity. There are no “water cooler” conversations to break up the work day and provide social interaction. Telecommuters, individual entrepreneurs and third bedroom workers often seek out public or community venues in which to work that provide them with the social interaction that is lacking when working independently.
- **Need for meeting space.** Depending on the individual’s home and family situation, meetings at home are not possible or appropriate. Consequently, they often need to find an alternative, usually public or community location, to conduct formal or informal meetings.
- **Access to broadband.** Third bedroom workers may not have reliable, fast or affordable service at their homes. In Taos, and similar rural areas, this is a critical constraint to third bedroom workers and location neutral businesses, not only in terms of cost, but in terms of productivity and revenue potential. If the individual is paid according to output and productivity (e.g., by line), and it takes 15 minutes to download a voice file, that is 15 minutes of time in which revenue is not being earned. Until the strategic investments are made in rural broadband access, third bedroom workers must seek alternative ways to access broadband that is not cost prohibitive or detrimental to productivity.
- **Access to IT technical services.** Third bedroom workers who work at home from their laptops and PCs, often lack access to timely and affordable technical services, should their computers or other equipment breakdown. This is an issue not just in terms of cost and access, but in terms of productivity and performance in meeting deadlines, since most remote workers are paid on the basis of their own productivity and timeliness.
- **Access to equipment.** In addition to services, third bedroom workers need equipment—computers, printers, headphones, fax machines, copiers—the kind of infrastructure usually covered by overhead at a typical business office. The cost of buying all the equipment and software is difficult for one individual and probably is not justified by the level of revenue earned from working at home (cost/benefit). Moreover, it may be difficult for the individual to access financing to purchase equipment.
- **Access to business services, including accounting and legal assistance.** Again, an individual working on his/her own often cannot afford business, accounting and legal services that might be required now and then. Many go without, with potentially significant consequences, particularly with regard to tax issues. Individuals working as third bedroom workers tend to be independent contractors, who are required to pay quarterly estimated taxes. They must also cover their full social security payments (as opposed to half when they are employees). And they often have jobs over and above the work they do at home, which complicates their tax status and accounting needs. At the same time, individuals may not know how to access or may not be able to afford professional services.

- **Lack of structure and related need for self-motivation and self discipline.** Many third bedroom workers choose the work because it gives them the flexibility to work according to their own schedule, often because they have multiple jobs or responsibilities. However, not everyone is cut out to work on their own. This was a *major* theme in our discussions with remote workers. Simply put, some personalities are better than others in terms of being able to create their own daily structure and to stick to a self-imposed work schedule, even when motivated by potential earnings.

These challenges reflect that fact that third bedroom workers, by virtue of working at home, do not have the physical office infrastructure, services and overhead to support their work, thus lowering their productivity and revenue potential. In fact, as a result of the growing phenomenon of third bedroom and location neutral workers, the concept of a “Third Place” has emerged, to address informally these constraints. The concept comes from the idea that one’s “first place” is the home and one’s “second place” is the office. The “third place” is an informal venue that is neither home nor office, but an open community or public space offering food and drink, services (e.g., access to wireless), and social interaction with friends and community. To some, third place specifically refers to a coffee shop, such as Starbucks, where individuals go with their laptops to access the Internet, meet friends, and drink coffee.

In order to formalize the concept of a third place, the location and the services need to be brought together in a way that third bedroom workers can access (physically) and afford, under a “shared” platform. In essence, many of the constraints outlined above can be addressed through what are called “shared services” in a large corporation--procurement, finance, accounting, IT, legal—in other words, centrally provided services delivered across a number of operational and technical units (departments, divisions, etc.) that do the core work of the organization. The costs of these services are allocated across all the operational units, and thus are “shared” by the organizational “users” of the services, usually through an overhead rate.

What third bedroom workers need, therefore, is a third place where they can access the services and support they need on a shared basis at a cost they can afford and still be profitable. Consequently, AISD conducted an assessment of the services available in Taos and identified and evaluated potential third place space upon which to build a 3BR support platform.

8.1 Services and Support

AISD met with a variety of community and business support organizations to discuss how existing programs might be tailored to support the specific needs of third bedroom workers in general and MTs in particular. The concept would be to design a “shared services platform” that would bring together a package of core services that third bedroom workers can access for a fixed monthly fee (perhaps based on a membership model), combined with negotiated discounts with specific service providers who are interested in gaining access to a targeted “bulk” market for their services. It is critical that the Third Place be able to cover its costs without significant subsidy, therefore, a fee-based approach is recommended. Best practice in provision of business services consistently demonstrates that fee-based services are both more sustainable and more effective, because users “value” the services they receive and are more likely to implement recommendations or assistance, and that they incorporate the costs into their profitability, making them better able to judge whether the services bring bottom line value to them or not.

AISD identified the following services for which local providers exist. Local providers with whom we met were open to the concept of participating in a shared services approach, because it provided

them with a defined and organized market with unmet demand. Note that some of the services discussed below are not necessary for a medical transcription specific effort; the aim in this discussion is to take the broader view of what might be needed to support a range of third bedroom workers and location neutral businesses.

- **Business counseling and networking.** The Taos Entrepreneurial Network (TEN) is uniquely positioned to provide services to startups and sole proprietors, and is interested in the idea of tailoring a set of services specifically to the needs of MTs and 3BR; they can also play a key role in recruitment because of their outreach capability and their model for “intake” of potential clients.
- **Accion New Mexico** is keenly interested in cooperation with TMTI, as their experience financing computer equipment has been positive and they view this opportunity as highly viable. They have also financed a successful small MT company based in Albuquerque, Stat IQ (see **Annex C**).
- **Accounting, bookkeeping, and tax assistance.** A basic package of assistance at a fixed fee tailored to the basic needs of a group of MTs/3BRs.
- **Legal assistance.** A basic package of assistance at a fixed fee tailored to the basic needs of a group of MTs/3BRs, including guidance on negotiating transcription agreements and contracts.
- **IT technical services.** A basic package of assistance at a fixed fee tailored to the basic needs of a group of MTs/3BRs.
- **Training.** Partnership with UNM-Taos and other training programs to provide access to ongoing training and apprenticeship opportunities, including general business topics as well as specific professional development areas.
- **Marketing and related services,** such as market strategy, market research services, graphic design, writing/publishing, and web design services.
- **Affiliated services** that relate to productivity, such as daycare, fitness, copy, printing and fax services, and travel services.
- **Access to broadband.** Needless to say, one of the most critical inputs to the success of any MT or 3BR initiative, and to development of location neutral businesses that can bring jobs and revenue into the local economy, is access to affordable and reliable high speed broadband. In fact, it is a pre-condition to success. It is mentioned here because of its strategic importance, but it is not addressed within the scope of this report. The issue is being addressed more appropriately by ongoing initiatives led by Luis Reyes at Kit Carson Electric and the Town of Taos.

8.2 Third Places

AISD identified possible “third places” that could serve as a platform for a shared services concept to support MTs and other location neutral businesses. AISD organized a tour and evaluation of potential sites in Taos on February 27, 2009. **Annex H** provides an assessment of each site based on a common set of key evaluation criteria, including:

- High Speed Broadband access
- Available training/conference room space
- Proximity to a coffee shop and other food retail concerns
- Capability for dealing with privacy concerns
- Access to IT technical services
- Access to business and professional services
- Location access advantages or disadvantages
- Other advantages

Locations evaluated included:

- ZC Sterling
- UNM-Taos Tech Lab
- Old Courthouse/ Plaza
- Taos Cyber Magnet School
- Kit Carson Electric
- Taos Library
- Taos Chamber

The initial conclusion of the group was that the Plaza location at the Old Courthouse may offer the best solution, due to its ideal central location, extensive available office capacity, and proximity to business services and coffee shops. The proposed use of the site may also coincide with potential plans by the town to rehabilitate and develop the site.

9 IMPLEMENTATION

During the course of our research, AISD identified an MT initiative that was implemented in Carlsbad, New Mexico, which provides valuable lessons learned for the implementation of TMTI.

Under a state grant, a professional MT with experience managing an MT company developed an MT program and sought proposals for participation from communities in New Mexico. Out of 23 responses, they narrowed the candidates to five and finally chose Carlsbad. Once Carlsbad was chosen, the City contributed additional grant funds to the program.

A training/work center was set up in the industrial park with 130 work stations, equipped with used computers organized in a call center layout. A full time trainer and a full time IT technical support person were hired. The training program went from 9 months to 2 years, depending on the skills level of program entrants, and included reading, in addition to doing lessons from a book, and actual medical transcription practice. They screened the trainees through Department of Work Force Solutions, which included a language, reading/comprehension skills exam, and had a minimum typing requirement of 35 wpm. The project partnered with a national company and hired full time employees to provide MT services to that client.

They experienced a high drop out rate by MTs. Many of the transcription trainees simply did not have sufficient typing, language, reading and comprehension skills to do the job. Many of them showed a lot of interest and determination but simply became frustrated and quit when they could not keep up with the work load.

Some of the lessons learned as reported by those involved included:

- Because the program was grant driven, there was pressure on the project to over report results even when they were not there, so that grant funding could be continued. In other words, they were focused on running a project, rather than a business.
- The in-house training was not effective and the program did not produce enough qualified and experienced MTs that could meet the standards and supply the demand for MT skills.
- They did not negotiate transcription agreements or contracts with either the transcription companies or with the participating transcriptionists and had no basis for enforcing quality and performance.

Our independent assessment, based on our discussions with them, was also that they made the classic mistake of focusing on large infrastructure investments before the training and workforce were in place, and were driven by unfounded assumptions about participation and training challenges. They also started too big, rather than ramping up based on supply of qualified workforce. Lastly, they depended on the Department of Workforce Development, which has no expertise in the MT industry, to screen participants, and the criteria they used for screening were inadequate.

These lessons learned reinforce the conclusions resulting from AISD's research and analysis, which provide parameters for implementation of a pilot program in Taos:

- Workforce development, and specifically the "experiential" aspect of developing qualified MTs, is the **most critical and highest priority investment** that needs to be made. Without a supply of qualified MTs able to meet industry standards, a pilot program will not be successful, and could result in lost credibility that would be detrimental to future efforts.
- The second most important challenge is ensuring the sustainability of the "hire, manage, pay" function, by pursuing a business driven model that responds to market demand versus a non-profit driven model. By nature, this function is a business function, not a community service. And given the large unmet demand, a market driven approach can be economically viable.
- A successful effort will require a well coordinated public-private partnership based on clearly defined roles, responsibilities and commitments. In general, we would view the appropriate role for the public sector to be creating the **enabling environment for private sector development**, through investments in workforce development and a business support platform. The management and sustainability of MT services involve core business functions best performed by a for-profit business, including hiring, managing, paying, quality control, market competitiveness, sustainability, and profitability.
- Strategic market partnerships with major MT market players will be critical to accurately assessing competitive requirements and industry trends and providing direct access to economic opportunity in the sector. Partnerships should focus first on workforce development; potential strategic partners will simply not come to the table until consistent quality results are demonstrated.
- The TMTI will require both short and long term investments. Therefore, we recommend the elements of a short term (one year) pilot program to test the concept building on existing assets

and programs, and outline the longer term investments that will be required to increase the economic viability of MT, 3BR and location neutral businesses and their contribution to the growth of the local economy.

- Lastly, given that there is no lack of demand for MT services, and that other regions in NM are interested in similar initiatives, a statewide approach may be called for, that allows for cost sharing and more effective leveraging of state resources particularly in the area of workforce development. Such an initiative is currently being developed by Lautman Economic Architecture and Community Economics Lab out of Albuquerque.

Based on these conclusions, we recommend an implementation plan that comprises the following components for a one year pilot:

1. **Workforce Development:** Identify and develop a cadre of qualified MTs from among the current students of the UNM-Taos transcription program as well as other community members with an interest in the opportunity. This would entail the following tasks:
 - a. Partner with UNM-Taos to create access to approved online MT training and certification, including Career Step
 - b. Identify and access grant resources that might help potential participants to pay for training
 - c. Develop and implement an externship program in partnership with Holy Cross Hospital
 - d. Engage strategic market partners to advise on training and apprenticeship programs
2. **“Hire, manage, pay” contract**
 - a. Conduct competitive process to hire an MT firm to provide “hire, manage pay” services under a performance based contract
 - b. Under the contract, conduct a strategic outreach effort to inform the community of the opportunity and identify the supply of interested participants
 - c. Screen potential candidates to identify those immediately able to participate and those needing additional training and experience
 - d. Link the contractor to strategic partnerships to engage qualified MTs in real opportunities,
3. **Business Support Platform:** Develop a baseline MT support services package that includes basic business counseling; accounting, tax and legal assistance; IT support; access to high speed broadband; and financing through Accion.

The implementation mechanism for management and implementation of the overall TMTI program can be a grant to a not-for profit organization or educational institution, or a contract with a for-profit company. The performance based contract to deliver the “hire, manage, pay” business function, however, must be with an experienced for-profit MT company.

The pilot will result in the following:

- 25-30 trained and qualified MTs working as independent contractors
- Proven basis for building a long term workforce and apprenticeship program
- Proven basis for developing a more comprehensive business support platform, including physical infrastructure (third place)

- Lessons learned based on a performance evaluation

In the long term, investments in the following will make the initiative more sustainable, and will support development of other 3BR and location neutral opportunities. The following investments can go forward at the same time as the pilot, as they will take longer to develop, implement and show results.

1. Develop a UNM-Taos MT curriculum that complies with AHDI standards and becomes an AHDI approved program, offered both on line and on campus
2. Introduce the MTIA/AHDI Registered Apprenticeship program through UNM-Taos
3. Develop a business plan for a “third place” that provides shared services to MT, 3BR and location neutral businesses, which addresses, among other things, management, staffing, revenue mechanisms, procurement process, information security protocols, and affiliated services agreements.
4. Ongoing strategic market partnership development, based on demonstrated success of the pilot and existence of a sustainable training and education program
5. Develop programs at the secondary school level to improve the skills and opportunities for students to pursue MT, 3R and location neutral opportunities.

ANNEX A: CONTACT LIST FOR MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION INITIATIVE

Organization	Contact	Phone Number	Email
Accion	Anthony Ulibari	505-243-8844	aulibari@AccionNM.org
ACT	Linda Tawanchaya	776-6700	ltawanchaya@acttoday.com
Community Against Violence	Malinda Dunnam, Jami McFarren	758-8082	jamim@taoscav.org
CPA Southwest	Doug Swinehart	758-3731	doug@cpasouthwest.com
Department of Workforce Solutions	Emalyn Olguin, Dean Archuleta	758-4219	eolguin@onestopnm.org
DTS America	Bonnie Bakal, Previous Vice President	575-302-9123	bbakal@aol.com
Holy Cross Hospital	Sally Hauser, Director of Health Information Management	575-751-5739	shauser@taoshospital.org
	Victoria Rael, Medical Transcriptionist	575-751-5773	victoriarael@gmail.com
	Lolly Fernandez, Medical Transcriptionist	575-751-5773	lollydefernandez@hotmail.com
	Dawn Richardson, ICU Nurse	575-758-8883	dawn@solarmusicfest.com
Kit Carson Electric	Luis Reyes	575-758-2258	lreyes@kitcarson.com ;
MedQuist	Emmy Weber Bruce Knudsen	1-800-233-3030	eweber@medquist.com
Review of Systems Expanded, LLC	Pat Bowen, Owner and medical transcriptionist trainer	1-866-424-6043	pat_bowen@msn.com
Stat IQ	Paula Whisenhunt, Owner	505-890-0008	plw@statiq.com
Taos Chamber of Commerce	Steve Fuhlendorf	575-751-8800	steve@taoschamber.com
Taos Community Foundation	Elizabeth Crittenden Palacios	575-737-9300	ecrittenden@taoscf.org
Taos Education Board Fund	Jake Mossman	575-758-3342 575-770-1430	jake@taosnet.com
Taos Entrepreneurial Network	Bruce Ross	575-758-7174	brross@taosnet.com
	Victoria Santistevan Gonzales	575-770-1079	vsg@kitcarson.net
Taos High School	Ann Karraker, Counselor	575-751-8002	annkar@taossschools.com
	Rodney Litkey, Principal	575-751-8002	rodney@taossschools.org
	Tracy Galligan, Teacher	575-751-8002	tragal@taossschools.org ;
	Betsy Ely, Teacher	575-751-8002	betely@taossschools.com
Taos Medical Group	Cathy Vigil, Medical Transcriptionist	575-758-2224	tmg@kitcarson.com
Taos Mountain Electronics	Brian Chew	575-751-0441	brian@taoselectronics.com ;
Taos Pueblo Economic	Shawn Duran	575-758-5990	sduran@taospueblo.com

Organization	Contact	Phone Number	Email
Development			
Training Specialist	Karen Henke, Training Assessment and Design	575-758-9562 575-758-8625	karen.a.henke@gmail.com
UNM-Taos	Joel Whitehead	575-737-6230	joel@unm.edu
	Jim Gilroy	575-737-6200 575-741-1120	gilroy@unm.edu
	Theresa Green	575-737-6200	tgreen@unm.edu ;
	Anne Marie Emanuelli, High School Computer Teacher	575-751-8002	emanuelli@newmex.com
	Tillie Valdez, Middle School Teacher	575-737-6000	tilval@taoschools.org
YOUNIQUE	Monique Barreras, Owner	505-473-4556	mbarreras@comcast.net
ZC Sterling	Katie Thomas	575- 751-0017	kathleen.thomas@zcsterling.com

ANNEX B: MAJOR NATIONAL MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION COMPANIES AND THEIR HIRING STANDARDS

Company	Prices	Services	Turn Around Time (TAT, hours)	Employment Information	Work From Home	Hiring
Accuscribe Transcription www.accuscribe.net	Information not available	Services include secure electronic file transfer through the DocOManage System	12-24	2 years of acute care experience plus experience with foreign dictators, with a minimum production ability of 1,100 lines per day. Must also have extensive knowledge of medical terms, and have liability insurance.	Yes	Yes
Aero Transcription *Industry Partner with Career Step www.aerotranscription.com	\$.15 per line	Offers Dictaphone, PRN, and the transmission of digital files through their web based services	4, 12, 24	Previous experience along with proof of certification from an AHDI approved training program.	Yes	No
Alpha Transcription *Industry Partner with Career Step www.alphatranscription.com	Prices start at \$.14 per line	Offers Dictaphone and provides enterprise express voice, text, and data management systems	2, 4, 12, 24, 48	Online skills assessment exam.	No	No
All Type *Industry Partner with Career Step www.alltype.net	Information not available	24 hour call in dictation, and EMR are available including ADT and HL7.	12-24	Minimum of 3 years experience in acute care, radiology, or multidisciplinary and knowledge of transcribing the basic 4. Pre-employment exam is also required.	Yes	Yes
Amphion *Industry Partner with Career Step www.amphionmedical.com	Each client is assessed and assigned a set fee based on individual needs	Provides 24 hour call in dictation, e-signature, and a quality management program.	24	Minimum of 2 years acute care or clinical transcribing experience, plus a transcription skills assessment exam.	Yes	Yes
Ascend Healthcare *Industry Partner with Career Step www.ascendhealthcare.com	Charges \$.12-\$.15 per line	Offers eSMART, SmartMD, and PortalMD web services based around EHR, along with providing call in	12, 24, 48, or 72	3 years of acute care experience and CMT's are preferred.	Yes	Yes

Company	Prices	Services	Turn Around Time (TAT, hours)	Employment Information	Work From Home	Hiring
		dictation.				
DTS America www.dtsam.net	Information not available	Provider of Dictaphone, call in dictation, pc dictation, e-signature and EMR technology.	1-48 hour TAT	Minimum of two years experience	Yes	Yes
eMTS *Industry Partner with Career Step www.e-mtsonline.com	Charges \$.12-\$.14 per line	Digital dictation, secure client web access, electronic signature capabilities, and industry standard interfaces.	24 or less	Minimum of 2 years of full time experience transcribing acute care, HIM reports, multispecialty clinic or radiology reports.	Yes	Yes
Encompass *Industry Partner with Career Step www.encompassmt.com	\$.12-\$.14 per line	Offers 24 hour toll free dictation service, speech recognition, electronic signature, and web based voice and self edit technology.	24	Minimum of 3 years experience in acute care or multi-specialty with a 98% accuracy rate. A pre-employment skills exam is also required.	Yes	Yes
eTrans Plus *Industry Partner with Career Step www.etransplus.com	Charges based per visible black characters at \$.010 or lower depending on the volume	Provide services through Dictaphone, Lanier, VDI, and RTAS, while offering call in dictation.	12-24	Minimum 3 years of acute care experience in addition to a pre-employment exam.	Yes	Yes
Focus Informatics *Industry Partner with Career Step www.focusinfomatics.com	\$.14-\$.15 per line	Uses speech recognition software, online editing, voice recognition software, e-signature, as well as 24 hour call in dictation.	12, 24, 48	At least 3 years of transcription experience is required as well as a pre-employment exam.	Yes	Yes
Linco Transcription www.lincotranscription.com	\$.14-\$.15 per line	Call in dictation and provides clients with the ability to access transcribed documents over a web based system.	12-24	2 year minimum requirement of acute care experience, must show excellent knowledge of medical terminology, and pass a pre-employment exam.	Yes	Yes

Company	Prices	Services	Turn Around Time (TAT, hours)	Employment Information	Work From Home	Hiring
MedGarde www.medgarde.com	\$.0025 per visible black character	Offers call in dictation and uses PDA dictation software technology.	24 hour guaranteed, or 2, 4, or 12 for an additional cost	Proof of completion form a medical transcription training program, 3 years of transcription experience or proof of on the job training.	Yes	Yes
MedQuist *Industry Partner with Career Step www.medquist.com	Charges \$.005-\$.0015 per visible black character (VBC) for a high volume, price increases slightly for smaller volumes	Uses digital voice capture, speech recognition, electronic signature, medical coding systems and services, and offers 24 hour call in dictation.	4, 12, 24, 48	Minimum of one year transcribing experience in radiology, oncology, acute care, clinic or ER, and must receive certification from an AHDI approved program.	Yes	Yes
MediVox www.medivox.com	\$.12-\$.13 per line	Offers electronic signature and EMR technology, and call in dictation.	48 business hours	Requires previous experience, computer skills, excellent knowledge of medical terminology, and ability to concentrate for long periods of time. Proofreading and editing skills, are also required.	Yes	Yes
Presynct *Industry Partner with Career Step www.presynct.com	\$.14-\$.16 per line	Uses HIS/RIS, ADT feed, call in dictation, CPOE software, LocusMD, and a secure encryption.	4, 12, or 24	2 years of full time transcription experience with the basic four as well as a pre-employment skills exam.	Yes	Yes
Professional Transcription Company www.protransco.com	\$.12-\$.14 per line	Offers HL-7 and other interfaces including HIS, CIS, and EMR systems, automated fetching, organizing, and optional printing. Files are transcribed into either Microsoft™ Word®, RTF, Text	24 or less	Previous experience required, and CMT's are preferred.	Yes	Yes

Company	Prices	Services	Turn Around Time (TAT, hours)	Employment Information	Work From Home	Hiring
		, HL-7, HTML, or XML, and PTC also offers electronic medical records, e-signature, and automated faxing options.				
Spheris *Industry Partner with Career Step http://spheris.com/	\$.13-\$.14 per line	Offers call in dictation and Spheris Clarity, a web based service.	4 hour STAT 24 hour TAT	Minimum of one year experience in either acute care, radiology, clinical multi specialty, or emergency room reports. A pre-employment exam is also required.	Yes	Yes
SPi *Industry Partner with Career Step www.spi-bpo.com	\$.00275 per visible black character or \$.14-\$.15 per line	Offers voice capture, speech recognition, and text editing. Also offers 24 tech support for all transcriptionists.	12- 24	Must have previous experience and pass a pre-employment skills test.	No	Yes
Sten-Tel *Industry Partner with Career Step www.sten-tel.com	Information not available	Offers speech recognition, e-signature, and EMR-based documentation services and technologies.	Information not available	Previous transcription experience in acute care, oncology, or cardiology.	No	Yes
Superior Global Solutions www.superiorglobal.com	Only services hospitals at \$.12-\$.16 per line	Provides call in dictation, speech recognition editing, 24 hour file access through the web based system.	2-24	Online application and pre-employment test.	No	Yes
Transcend www.transcendservices.com	Charges \$.0045 per visible black character, however, there is a \$10,000 per month minimum.	Internet based voice processing, BeyondTXT, and 24 hour call in dictation.	24 or less	Previous experience required along with a pre-employment skills exam.	Yes	Yes

Company	Prices	Services	Turn Around Time (TAT, hours)	Employment Information	Work From Home	Hiring
Tranclarity www.tranclarity.com	Information not available.	Offers call in dictation and digital data transfer.	24-48	One year of transcription experience.	Yes	Yes

* All of these companies offer individuals who are interested in medical transcription the ability to enroll in training programs through an industry partnership program with Career Step, which is an AHDI approved training program that also links their students to available job opportunities with the partnered companies.

ANNEX C: MAJOR NEW MEXICO MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION COMPANIES AND THEIR HIRING STANDARDS

COMPANY	PRICING	SERVICES	TURN AROUND TIME (TAT, HOURS)	EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS	WORK FROM HOME	HIRING
Affordable Medical Transcription www.affordablemedicaltranscription.com	\$.015 per word or \$.13 per line	Offers transcription services in 21 medical specialty areas. Services available to clinics, physician offices, and all medical providers, all specialties and include electronic delivery.	Utilizing a computer based program, 6 to 12; using hand held digital recorder, 12-24	All transcriptionists must have a minimum of 10 years experience, and must live within the continental US. Transcriptionists are screened and must meet all HIPAA, JCAHO, and AAMT compliances	Yes	No
Accustat Medical Transcription www.accustat.org	Transcription is billed by the 65 character line, averaging about \$.14 per line.	Offers 24 hour call in dictation, electronic delivery, STAT capabilities.	24	Must have 2 years experience and live within the continental US. Employed as a subcontractor.	Yes	Yes
STAT IQ Solutions www.statiq.com	Based on specific needs, charged by the 65 character line, at an average of \$.14- \$.16 per line.	Offers 24 hour call in dictation, electronic delivery, and secure personal online transcription database.	24	Must have 2 years full time experience in acute care along with the basic 4 and/or multi-specialty clinical experience. Employed as an independent contractor, can live anywhere in US, and are provided the required software by STAT IQ.	Yes	Yes
Proscript www.proscripts.com	Fees assessed based on the individual needs of the	Uses Lanier Voice Writer Digital Dictation for efficient client accessibility. Offers call in dictation as well as additional services:	24	All transcriptionists adhere to the American Association of Medical Transcriptionists guidelines for style and ethics, and have been trained in medical and legal terminology as well as ICD-9-	Yes	Yes

COMPANY	PRICING	SERVICES	TURN AROUND TIME (TAT, HOURS)	EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS	WORK FROM HOME	HIRING
	client.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notary • Legal Typing • Facsimile • Photocopying 		CM and CPT-IV coding. Employed as subcontractor.		
Type Thing Services www.type-thing.com	Depending on the service, TTS charges by the hour, by the word, or by the task.	Offers call in dictation, transcribes tapes and most digital. Transcription services include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Transcription • Secretarial and Technical Support 	Information is unavailable.	Information is unavailable.	NA	NA
Younique mbarreras@comcast.com	\$.12 per line	Digital transcription services.	24-48	Minimum of 6 months-1 year transcription experience or proof of certification required.	Yes	Yes

ANNEX D: MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION PROGRAMS AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Institution	Average Completion Time (Full time)	Degree Level	Total Cost	Location
Allied Medical & Technical Institute www.alliedteched.edu	2 years	Diploma	N/A	Forty Fort, PA Scranton, PA
Baker College www.baker.edu	18 months	Certificate	\$9,690	Flint, MI
*Central Texas College www.ctcd.edu	1 year	Certificate	\$5,070	Killeen, TX or Online
Kaplan College www.kaplancollege.com	18 months	Certificate Associates degree	\$30,000	Phoenix, AZ California- 11 Campuses Denver, CO Indiana- 4 Campuses Maryland- 2 Campuses Las Vegas, NV Cincinnati, OH Renton, WA Milwaukee, WI
Kaplan University www.kaplan.edu	2.5 years	Associates degree	\$31,770	Davenport, IA Or Online
*Lakeshore Technical College http://gotoltc.edu	1 year	Diploma	N/A	Cleveland, WI
*Medical Transcription Education Center www.mtecinc.com	18 months	Diploma Certificate	\$1,825- \$3,495 depending on experience	Fairlawn, OH or Online
Spencerian College www.spencerian.edu	16 months	Diploma	\$12,000	Lexington, KY Louisville, KY
Tech Skills www.techskills.edu	1 year	Certificate	N/A	Tampa, FL Indianapolis, IN St. Louis, MO Lenexa, KS Las Vegas, NV
Tri-State Business Institute www.tsbi.edu	9 months	Certificate	N/A	Erie, PA
University of New Mexico-Taos www.taos.unm.edu	2 years	Certificate as an Administrative Assistant	\$1,158- \$2,584	Taos, NM
Northern New Mexico College www.nnmc.edu	2 years	Certificate in Medical Office Assistance	\$1,469	Espanola, NM

Institution	Average Completion Time (Full time)	Degree Level	Total Cost	Location
*Richland Community College www.richland.edu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 months (certificate) • 2 years (degree) 	Certificate Associates degree	\$7,772	Decatur, IL or online
*Seminole Community College's Medical Transcription Program www.sccfl.edu	2.5 years	Diploma Certificate	\$8,598	Sanford, FL

ANNEX E: MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION PROGRAMS AVAILABLE ON LINE

Institution	Average Completion Time (Full Time)	Degree Level	Total Cost	Location
*A&H Training Corporation www.ahtraining.com	1 year	• Certificate	\$4,617	Latham, NY or Online
*The Andrews School www.andrewsschool.com	1 year	• Certificate	\$3,800	Online
Baker College www.baker.edu	18 months	• Certificate	\$9,690	Michigan- 9 Campuses Or Online
*Can Scribe Career Center www.canscribe.com	1 year	• Certificate	\$5,200	Online
*Career Step www.careerstep.com	4 months	• Certificate	\$1,875	Online
*Central Texas College www.ctcd.edu	1 year	• Certificate	\$5,070	Killeen, TX or Online
*Everett Community College www.everettcc.edu	9 months	• Certificate	\$4,665	Online
*Exact-Med www.exactmed.com	15 months	• Certificate	\$4,400	Online
Kaplan University www.kaplan.edu	2.5 years	• Associates degree	\$31,770	Davenport, IA Or Online
*Medical Transcription Education Center www.mtecinc.com	18 months	• Diploma • Certificate	\$1,825- \$3,495 based on experience level	Fairlawn, OH or Online
*Med-Line School of Medical Transcription http://medlineschool.com	2 years	• Certificate	\$3,300	Online
*MSU Bottineau www.msub.edu	18 months	• Diploma • Certificate	\$2,680	Online
*Richland Community College www.richland.edu	4 months	• Certificate	\$2,574	Decatur, IL or Online
*TRS Institute www.trsinstitute.com	1 year	• Certificate	\$3,995	Online

* Indicates the programs that are AHDI approved medical transcription education programs.

ANNEX F: UNM-TAOS CONCEPT PAPER FOR DEVELOPING AND UPGRADING A MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION CURRICULUM ALIGNED WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS



DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTION
115 CIVIC PLAZA DRIVE
TAOS, NEW MEXICO 87571

CONCEPT PAPER Biomedical Transcription Services

Purpose: To provide the professional training required by job seekers in order to qualify for positions in the biomedical transcription services fields.

Objective: To develop and deliver a series of courses which will provide the skills and training necessary to become a professional medical transcriptionist. Completing the series of courses will result in a UNM-Taos for credit certificate in Biomedical Transcription. An internship with an appropriate partner, such as Holy Cross Hospital, will be a required part of this training.

Approach: To build on existing training programs that are already in place at UNM-Taos. UNM-Taos is in an excellent position to partner in this pilot program because all of the foundation courses and pre-requisite courses for this training are in place.

Pre-requisites currently offered:

- Intro to Word Processing
- Beginning Keyboarding and Keyboarding Applications
- Machine Transcription and Legal/Medical Transcription
- Medical Terminology
- Biology and Anatomy

Courses to be developed for the pilot:

- Advanced Medical Transcription
- Concepts of Disease
- Pharmacology and Laboratory Medicine
- Internship specifically for medical transcriptionists, in partnership with Holy Cross Hospital.

Key activities to complete the training curriculum and program:

- Collaborate with local Taos medical partners to ensure the course content is specific to the pilot internship jobs.
- Collaborate with national partners to ensure course content contains training for their needs.
- Research augmenting instruction/courses with online courses from Career Step.
- Recruit instructors for the advanced machine transcription and medical knowledge content courses.
- Align program with *AHDI* – Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity.
- Recruit pilot cohort of students from existing Administrative Assistant Program.
- Design and deliver training program such that the student has skills to obtain industry approved Registered Medical Transcriptionist Credential.

ANNEX G: HOLY CROSS HOSPITAL CONCEPT PAPER FOR MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM



CONCEPT PAPER HOLY CROSS HOSPITAL TRANSCRIPTION PARTNERSHIP

PURPOSE: To partner with The University of New Mexico-Taos to prepare entry level Medical Transcriptionists for the work force. Holy Cross Hospital would serve in the capacity of providing an externship for enrolled students.

OBJECTIVE: The Town of Taos is pursuing a pilot program to tap into the existing workforce of Taos while providing telecommuting opportunities. The field of medical transcription was selected for the pilot program. "A recent multidisciplinary research team from Bentley College demonstrated a dwindling medical transcription workforce in the demanding field of healthcare documentation. Quality healthcare delivery often depends on quality medical records, extending from patient treatment to healthcare providers recouping costs. If there exists a shortage of Medical Transcriptionists a gap in the document production process occurs, thereby creating gaps on a number of levels."²²

One of the benefits of a Medical Transcriptionist program would potentially keep skilled workers in the community. Transcription is often outsourced to 3rd party vendors due to the lack of an available work pool. Graduates of the program may work from a remote location with flexible hours to meet the changing dynamics of the current workforce.

The current workforce is aging, hospitals are often unable to devote the time necessary to train transcriptionists. The Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity (AHDI) has recognized this and has approved Model Curriculum for training purposes. The students must complete a practicum of a minimum of 100 transcription hours in an externship or simulated professional practice setting.²³

APPROACH: The Health Information Management Department (Medical Records) at Holy Cross Hospital would serve as an externship site. The students would receive hands on dictation from Radiologists, Pathologists, Internal Medicine and Surgeons. The different work types and styles of reports would prepare the students for an entry level position upon graduation. Experienced Medical Transcriptionists would be available to mentor the students during the externship. The students would be exposed to the Health Information Management Department and how transcribed documents are incorporated into the Medical Record. A maximum of two students would be completing their externship at a time.

²² Association for Healthcare Documentation Integrity: Medical Transcription Association. For the Record June 9th, 2008

²³ The Model Curriculum for Medical Transcription 4th Edition, developed by The Association of Healthcare documentation Integrity

ANNEX H: THIRD PLACE EVALUATION MATRIX

Factors	ZC Sterling	UNM-Taos Tech Lab	Old Courthouse/ Plaza	Taos Cyber Magnet School	Kit Carson Electric	Taos Library	Taos Chamber
Access to High Speed Broadband	Connected to high speed internet broadband	Connected to high speed internet, and will be connected to broadband by year's end through Qwest.	Free high speed wireless internet available to Taos Plaza, lacks fiber optic connection for broadband	Connected to high speed internet through Qwest, lacks fiber optic connection for broadband	Connected to high speed and broadband. However, for broadband, a personal Ethernet cable is required.	Connected to high speed internet, lacks a fiber optic connection for broadband.	Free wireless internet access, lacks a fiber optic connection for broadband.
Available training/conference room space	One training room equipped with 12 computer stations.	Potential training space that consists of three computer labs with a total of 48 computers. There is also a faculty room available for conferences that can hold a maximum of 14 people.	Several large and small rooms are available throughout the building that are ideal for training sessions and work stations. There are 3 medium sized rooms on the second floor, capable of fitting six work stations in each. There are also 2 large rooms on the second floor with a maximum seating capacity of 75 in each. On the first floor, there are also 3 medium sized rooms in the back of the building, accompanied by four smaller rooms that could be used as temporary offices or business support zones in front. There are currently 2 shops that could be turned into additional business support areas or conference	Has 2 potential training spaces that includes a total of 20 computers. Ten of those computers are in a classroom and the other 10 are in the computer lab. The maximum number of students that can enroll in TCMS is 15.	Potential space in conference room for lectures and/or workshops, which is designed to seat maximum of 75.	No available training space, but there is an available conference room that can seat a maximum of 40 people.	Facility is not ideal for training, but has a large conference room that has the maximum capacity of 30 people and contains a projector and a large projection screen.

Factors	ZC Sterling	UNM-Taos Tech Lab	Old Courthouse/ Plaza	Taos Cyber Magnet School	Kit Carson Electric	Taos Library	Taos Chamber
			rooms. The larger room capable of holding up to 30 people and the other up to 8.				
Proximity to a coffee shop and other food retail concerns	There is a large break room that could potentially serve as a cyber café space and can hold a maximum of 25 people. ZCS is located about a half mile from The Southside Bean.	By car the nearest café is The Southside Bean, located 2-3 miles from the Tech Lab. There are also several fast food chains and Mexican restaurants within that 2-3 mile strip.	Located within 3 blocks of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starbucks • Ogelvie's • Café Loka • McDonald's • Taos Inn • Bent St. Deli • Michael's Kitchen 	Nearest café located approximately one mile north of the cyber school, The North side Bean, nearest restaurants include Michael's Kitchen and Dragonfly, are approximately one mile south.	Located within a half mile of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Southside Bean • Wired Cyber Café • El Taoseno 	Located within 6 blocks of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starbucks • Ogelvie's • Café Loka • McDonald's • Dragonfly • Taos Inn • Bent St. Deli • Michael's Kitchen 	Located less than half a block from Café Tazza and within 3 blocks of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starbucks • Oglevie's • Café Loka • McDonald's • Taos Inn • Bent St. Deli
Capability for dealing with privacy concerns	Facility is secure, has private workstations, (excluding the training lab), all computers require personal login information and have a secure online network. Employees must have electronic id card to enter the building.	Only UNM-Taos students may use the lab and must have a UNM logon and password. There are no private working stations available in any of the three labs,	Unlimited public access, all rooms except for the 2 existing shops, are currently empty	Semi private, students are able to access all functions of the computer, but must have a login id and password in order to log on to the cyber school network.	Unlimited public access	Unlimited public access	Unlimited public access
Access to IT technical services	ZCS has one full time tech service employee.	UNM-Taos currently employs one full time and one part time employee that provide tech service support.	No current access to IT	TCMS receives internet service from Qwest and employs a full time IT service technician.	No current access to IT.	IT service is provided through The Town of Taos and Qwest.	IT service is provided through The Town of Taos and Qwest.
Access to business and professional services	ACS offers access to copiers and a fax machine, and is also located one mile south of South Side	Access to copiers and fax machines are available to students at the UNM-Taos Library	Plan for future business incubator/support services through the Taos Chamber of	Minimal access to a printer and fax. TCMS is located approximately 1.5 miles from Copy	Kit Carson Electric will finance up to \$1,000 for those customers that are in good standing, who	Access to copiers, computers, and internet. The library is also just a few blocks from	Minimal access to a copier and a fax machine, but is located within 3 blocks of Copy

Factors	ZC Sterling	UNM-Taos Tech Lab	Old Courthouse/ Plaza	Taos Cyber Magnet School	Kit Carson Electric	Taos Library	Taos Chamber
	Copies and is .5 miles from Peterson Law Firm.	(115 Civic Plaza Dr.) Copy Queen is located one block north of the UNM library, and Natelson Law Firm along with Armstrong & Armstrong Law Firm are within 3 blocks of the downtown campus.	Commerce. The facility located 2 blocks from Taos Chamber of Commerce, 3 blocks from Copy Queen, and 5 blocks from Natelson Law Firm and Armstrong & Armstrong Law Firm.	Queen, Natelson Law Firm, and Armstrong & Armstrong Law Firm.	need to purchase a computer, and is located one block north of CPA Southwest accounting services.	Natelson Law Firm and Armstrong & Armstrong Law Firm.	Queen.
Location access advantages or disadvantages	<p>Location: 110 Paseo del Canon West</p> <p>Advantages: Large facility, with bathrooms and available parking.</p> <p>Disadvantages: Not located near a café, and must cross busy intersection to get to nearby fast food restaurants a few blocks away.</p>	<p>Location: Klauer Campus, 1157 State Rd. 570</p> <p>Advantages: Parking available.</p> <p>Disadvantages-6.5 miles south of UNM-Taos downtown campus, and is located on the outskirts of town.</p>	<p>Location: Taos Plaza</p> <p>Advantages: Easy access, located in the center of town within short walking distance from multiple cafés and restaurants, Copy Queen, and UNM-Taos Downtown, and plenty of parking nearby.</p> <p>Disadvantages: Not yet established.</p>	<p>Location: 885 Star Rd., Taos Pueblo</p> <p>Advantages: Available parking, semi private location, and a bathroom.</p> <p>Disadvantages: Not within close walking distance to a café.</p>	<p>Location: 118 Cruz Alta Rd.</p> <p>Advantages: The conference room is available to anyone at any time at no cost.</p> <p>Disadvantages: Kit Carson Electric is located next to the 24 hour ACT Call Center, which may cause a parking issues during regular business hours.</p>	<p>Location: 400 Camino de la Placita</p> <p>Advantages: The library has a quiet work environment and plenty of work space for those that have their own laptop. The library has plenty of parking and is within walking to multiple nearby café's, UNM-Taos, and the Plaza.</p> <p>Disadvantages: None</p>	<p>Location: 108 Kit Carson Rd., Suite F</p> <p>Advantages: Located in the center of town within short walking distance from multiple cafés and restaurants, Copy Queen, and UNM-Taos Downtown, and plenty of parking nearby.</p> <p>Disadvantages: None</p>
Other advantages	Has existing screening/training program	3 computer labs allow for multiple training courses to simultaneously occur.	Significant potential	TCMS is located on the Pueblo and are therefore able to receive private government funding as well as tax breaks.	Large board room equipped with projector and screen, ideal for workshops and lectures.	Has a central location.	Small Kiva room that with an added desk, it could be used as a work station/outlet