

# MICROFILM DIVIDER

OMB/RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

SFN 2053 (2/85) 5M



ROLL NUMBER

DESCRIPTION

14/4

2005 HOUSE EDUCATION

HB 1414

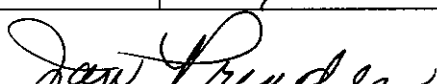
2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. **HB 1414**

House Education Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date **1 Feb 05**

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		4240 - end
		x	0 - 2200
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

**Chairman Kelsch opened the hearing on HB 1414.**

**Rep. Dwight Wrangham, District 8,** introduced the bill. (**Testimony attached.**) I introduced the bill to better align our accreditation regulation to specific training programs in a way that I feel best serves the trainees. I feel precise medical transcription as is done by Exact-Med should not be classified as a post secondary education program. Exact-Med does not hold out to offer general education. They do not hold out that they teach basic skills such as English or Spelling. They offer Medical Transcription to individuals who already possess these skills. Typically the individuals may have already attended a post secondary education institution but did not possess the adequate skills to find suitable employment. Exact-Med trains these individuals to a higher level of proficiency thus improving their employment opportunities. I urge you to pass HB1414 and exempt centers that specifically train medical transcription from the present accreditation requirements. Those programs serve no purpose in this instance.

They offer no competency testing of trained individuals. There is an accreditation program being developed that will the ability to test students as to their proficiency. You'll hear more about that from Ms. Renee Becker. When this accreditation program is fully developed we may want to take another look at this exemption. I feel an amendment to this bill, possibly a sunset in four years, is something you may want to look at. If you feel you would like to do, please do so.

This would insure we take another look at it in four years.

**Renee Becker, Owner, Exact-Med Transcription Training**, testified in favor of the bill.

**(Testimony attached.)**

**Rep. Wall:** Which colleges currently offer medical transcription?

**Becker:** BSC offers a medical office procedures. Whapeton offers a transcription program and I believe Williston.

**Rep. Herbel:** What is the dropout rate?

**Becker:** Our drop out rate is 25-27%. It is a fairly tough course. I don't charge the full tuition up front. I charge in three phases and they pay as they go and it's refunded up to half ways into each section. I don't have a lot of money on the books.

**Rep. Herbel:** What is the starting salary for a transcriptionist?

**Becker:** Starting salary is \$10 - \$12 per hour. They can make over \$20 per hour. I have one of my previous students here to testify to that.

**Rep. Herbel:** I noticed in your testimony that they need two years of experience. Is that because people don't want to hire them unless they've had two years of experience? How do you get two years of experience if no one wants to hire you?

**Becker:** The industry has not kept up with the medical end. If we look at the complexity of our surgical procedures, colleges are teaching at a very, very basic medical transcription level. They are giving them classes in computer when they know how to keyboard.

**Rep. Meier:** How many months does it take a student to get through your program.

**Becker:** Our program is competency based. If a student stays on schedule, about a year. I've had some finish in six months because they worked at it hard. I have some that have taken a year and a half. They have families, full time jobs, etc. It takes time to absorb and learn. I've had some get through to the end and they're not ready so I bring them back in. I offer that to them

**Rep. Meier:** How much does your program cost?

**Becker:** \$3800 and I include all of the books.

**Rep. Wall:** What is the current college accreditation procedures? How do you become licensed?

**Becker:** In the industry they have to pass a transcription test. An employer is going to want to know that know how to transcribe and to what level. There are a lot of people that come out at a very entry level transcription. They could pull somebody off the street to do that. It's when you get to the more difficult work that they hand out of those tests. They have to get 97-98% accuracy if they don't do that they are not employed. They tell them to work in the industry for a couple of years and that's where the problem comes in. It's the difficult work where the gap is getting bigger and bigger.

**Rep. Mueller:** You read a letter from Barbara Grow. Do you agree with everything she says.

She's a bit harsh about education--grades mean nothing to the real world of transcription, the

material doesn't equate to what transcription is, etc. It doesn't seem to square well with a lot of what we do here, and maybe it shouldn't.

**Becker:** Absolutely, I couldn't have said it better myself. I don't think this industry has been looked at in a very, very long time as to what we are turning out. Our terminology and anatomy are probably a pre-nursing level. Another thing that comes up is foreign dialects and there is very little training in that. Colleges will turn out maybe 600 minutes of dictation, our very minimum is 2400 minutes and it's all done at hospital level.

**Linda Farvier, associate of Renee Becker,** spoke in favor of the bill. I have been a medical transcriptionist for over 20 years and helped Williston State College implement their two year curriculum. The industry now wants someone who is titled "medical transcriptionist" Most college programs include clerical skills and are referred to something different. Their courses are not taught by an active medical transcriptionists who have been employed in the field and therefor are not getting the hands on training. I have also been a supervisor at MedCenter transcription in the past employing 15 transcriptionists. Individuals from the 2-yr institutions took 6 - 8 months of transcriptions to get to the level needed. Exact-Med turns out some of the best transcriptionists. I urge you to support HB 1414.

**Lynette Lawler, student of Exact-Med,** testified in favor of the bill. She told of having a job immediately upon completing her course at Exact-Med and now earns \$24 per hour.

**Wayne Kutzer, director of the State Board of Career and Technical Education,** testified in opposition to the bill. (Testimony attached.)

**Rep. Mueller:** What are you charging Exact-Med for this accreditation.

**Kutzer:** The accreditation is something they do on their own. The authorization is \$1000 for new and \$500 for renewals. That's for the authorization to operate in the state. The accreditation is between a school and the accrediting body.

**Rep. Sitte:** Are you familiar with this accrediting body that is getting up and running and within four years will be able to govern this profession?

**Kutzer:** The AAMT currently is not recognized by the US Department of Education. The accrediting body looks at the school, it wouldn't set up a board of oversight within the state, but it looks at the school, their offerings, and approves them from an educational standpoint.

**Rep. Sitte:** As these different professions take up on a life of their own, and it appears this one is just coming of age, I'm wondering if we could make a provision for four years so they would be able to obtain an alternative accreditation that would not be as costly to them as this one would. We had a provision for post secondary education of fewer than 10 students would be exempt from some of these rules. Could you change that and make it fewer than 20 students so we could allow them to operate.

**Kutzer:** The overriding reason why we have oversight is consumer protection. Students are protected in terms of their tuition if the school does close. There is a SB that will be coming that does is removes the mention of schools with an enrollment under ten and puts in a statement to the effect for those occupations that has a low census. We will look at anything that protects students.

**Chairman Kelsch closed the hearing on HB 1414 and appointed a subcommittee of Reps: Sitte, Hunskor and Wall to look possible changes to the bill.**

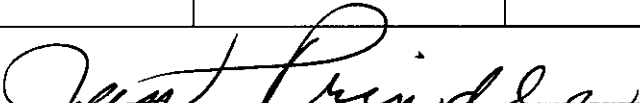
2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. **HB 1414**

House Education Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date **14 February 05**

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	X		4380 - end
		x	0 - 450
Committee Clerk Signature 			

Minutes:

**Chairman Kelsch opened discussion of HB 1414.**

**Rep. Sitte:** I have an amendment prepared that is being passed out to you. Mr. Kutzer (**Wayne Kutzer, director of the State Board of Career and Technical Education**) just spoke to me and he made a wise decision so I've asked Ms Thomas to amend it further. What we are proposing is that the medical transcriptionist school would be exempted from accreditation for two years. Several reasons for this: The national American Association of Medical Transcriptionists is working on an approval process on accrediting curriculum. They are not going as far as to say an "accreditation at a national level" yet. That will fit Renee Becker's situation far more closely than any of the rest of these accrediting institutions would. As you remember from testimony, accreditation would cost her probably \$10 - \$11,000. It would require them to have them student loans processed, federal grant applications, and she doesn't want that big. She doesn't want to get into all of that. She was very discouraged and thinking of quitting business. In an effort to



accommodate her and yet to make sure she is still bonded, there is about seven pages of law that she would still have to comply with and fill out each year. The only thing is that for two years she would be exempted from accreditation while she is pursuing an accreditation that would fit her school more closely. I

**Rep. Sitte:** I would like to **move the amendment.**

**Rep. Haas:** I second.

**Rep. Hunskor:** I'd like to hear Mr. Kutzer's explanation of why this makes it more tolerable, if it does.

**Kutzer:** Our major concern in terms of changing the bill was it had to be narrow enough to fit this particular instance but if it were any wider than this, it would be very difficult to figure out what the consequences of it might be. With two years exemption, that may give her enough time to become accredited. It does open the door for anybody else that wants to start a medical transcription to start without that transcription piece. We normally allow up to two years of provisional status for a school. In this case she's in year 3.5 and soon will be 4. It had to be made to allow for her to operate for that time.

**Rep. Hunskor:** Does your board see this as an acceptable piece of legislation as far as letting her operate for two more years?

**Kutzer:** Our board hasn't met since this legislation has been introduced. They will meet on the 22nd and this will be discussed.

**Rep. Hunskor:** What's your thought?

**Kutzer:** They will have concern in that she has had 3.5 years of provisional. Our board has always been accommodating if there is a good faith effort on someone's part to continue with the process:

**Rep. Wall:** Do you see this as in any way starting a dangerous precedent and lead to becoming a diploma mill even though no diploma is given but they are obviously ducking accreditation. Do you see that as something serious?

**Kutzer:** The issue of precedence from your vantage point would be opening the door that other schools that don't meet the accreditation piece will come before this body instead of in front of our board. Yes, I would have to agree that could be a case and could happen.

**Rep. Mueller:** What we're doing is a delaying tactic with this amendment and the bill. Is that going to change with this particular group in two years in your opinion. I would allow that to be answered by anyone sitting on the Committee.

**Kutzer:** In my opinion the organization that she is working for accreditation through is not recognized by the Department of Education yet they have indicated in an email to Rep. Sitte that in the future they plan to. It was simply "in the future they plan to" there was no time limit on it. My opinion is that in two years you will have to find another, the accreditation body she is looking at will not become recognized. That would be my guestimate.

**Rep. Sitte:** I did check with Med Center One, St Alexius and several people who hire her graduates and the truly are very pleased with the graduates. What would happen if she overnight become a diploma mill and she lose her high standards? Would you explain the recourse you have under the law to shut her down.

**Kutzer:** There is a provision that passed last session that makes it criminal offense to use a false degree or to issue one. That would be enforced by the States Attorney in whichever district she operates in.

**Rep. Sitte:** You were saying that if someone would start up a school now, you do have recourse.

**Kutzer:** Yes. In a broad sense. It's the States Attorney that would do the enforcement.

**Rep. Haas:** Are you familiar with Exact Med. Are you aware if they have accreditation in other state?

**Kutzer:** Not other than they have been in the application for 3.5 years. I did see their web site last week. I understand it's a ND based business started 3.5 years ago.

**A voice vote was taken.**

**Yes: 12 No: 1 Absent: 1 The amendment was adopted.**

**Rep. Sitte:** I move **Do Pass as amended.**

**Rep. Haas:** I second.

**Rep. Wall:** With due respect to subcommittee members, Rep Sitte has worked very hard to find a way to make this work for Exact Med. I commend that. I would be remiss in not saying that I have a great deal of reservation on this bill. Rep. Hunskor, Rep. Sitte and I originally came up with a do not pass recommendation. Then with amendments it seemed like it became palatable. I think we are setting dangerous precedence in a time of accreditation and at time when we are trying to raise the bar higher and trying to set higher standards for education. Here we're saying to one group it's okay for you even though after 3.5 years when people have tried to work with them and bent over backwards to get them accreditation they have not become accredited.

Frankly I'm skeptical they will. Last week the Fargo Forum had a long article about MT and primarily WY and the fact that there you can start a school. It takes very little. You don't need accreditation, you don't need much of anything. This might be taking us down the same road. I have nothing against this group from appearances it seems they are doing things very well. I'm just worried that it is a precedent and because of that I will be resisting this bill even with the sunset clause.

**Rep. Sitte:** In my research we checked what several other states were doing. In many states these are called proprietary schools, single ownership schools. In Utah and New York for instance you simply register and there is no accreditation required. In their web site they say that registration no way implies approval by the state. In many states these are under the department of commerce and they are seen as small business. If this had gone through IBL, it would have flown through. We're always looking for ways to help small businesses get started. Having taught in both accredited schools and approved schools, I can tell you that often accreditation is just jumping through a series of hoops and doesn't necessarily mean that the school is all that much better. Williston has only 50% placement of their graduates. They're looking at adding an internship because they realize their students don't have enough hands on experience.

Renee's school does. She has 100% placement and the employers are really happy. I know we are setting a precedent and yet I know this Committee well enough to know we're not going to be rolled over by every group that comes before us in future sessions wanting exemptions.

**Rep. Hunskor:** Let me get my perspective on this. Exact Med, as I understand it, has appeared before Mr. Kutzer's board at regular intervals and each time indicated they plan on moving toward certification of their business. Then the next time the same, and the next the same thing,

and the next time the same. There never was any action taken just an intent to. The question is in the next two years, is this just a stalling tactic or is she going to move in the direction to get her business certified. That's the issue.

**Rep. Herbel:** Is this all about money? Is that the bottom line? It's not a matter of quality performance, it's about money?

**Rep. Sitte:** I asked her that because as we figured out she would have to raise her tuition by a \$100 or \$200 and she would cover the cost of her accreditation. She said it was more than that. She's a one person operation and would have to hire staff, put in place procedures for student loans and creating an enormous bureaucracy for herself that she doesn't want to get into. She likes the size the company and is happy with that. She if finally turned a little bit of profit this third year. I don't think she's gone before the board. She's turned in her paperwork. She has not received any special favoritism until now.

**The question was called:**

**A roll call vote was taken.**

**Yes: 9    No: 4    Absent: 1    The bill as amended Passes.**

**Rep. Sitte will carry the bill.**

**House Amendments to HB 1414 - Education Committee 02/15/2005**

Page 1, line 1, after "A BILL" replace the remainder of the bill with "for an Act to amend and reenact section 15-20.4-04 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to medical transcription schools; and to provide an expiration date.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

**SECTION 1. AMENDMENT.** Section 15-20.4-04 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

**15-20.4-04. Minimum standards - Exceptions.** All postsecondary educational institutions must be accredited by national or regional accrediting agencies recognized by the United States department of education. The board may additionally require such further evidence and make such further investigation as in its judgment may be necessary. Any postsecondary educational institution operating in this state seeking its first authorization to operate may be issued a provisional authorization to operate on an annual basis until the institution becomes eligible for accreditation by a recognized accrediting agency. Upon completion of the accreditation process, the institution shall submit evidence of accreditation, or a substantial good-faith showing of progress toward such status. Only upon accreditation shall an institution become eligible for a regular authorization to operate. This section does not apply to ~~postsecondary~~:

1. Postsecondary educational institutions operating in this state and enrolling ten or fewer students; and
2. Medical transcription schools.

**SECTION 2. EXPIRATION DATE.** This Act is effective through June 30, 2007, and after that date is ineffective."

Renumber accordingly

Date: 14 Feb 05  
Roll Call Vote #: 1

2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1414

House Education Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number 50718.0102

Action Taken Amend from Anita Thomas, LC

Motion Made By Sitte Seconded By Haas

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Kelsch			Rep. Hanson		
Vice Chairman Johnson			Rep. Hunskor		
Rep. Haas			Rep. Mueller		
Rep. Hawken			Rep. Solberg		
Rep. Herbel					
Rep. Horter					
Rep. Meier					
Rep. Norland					
Rep. Sitte					
Rep. Wall					

Total (Yes) 12 No 1

Absent 1 (Horter)

Floor Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 14 Feb 05  
Roll Call Vote #: 2

2005 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1414

House Education Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number 50718.0102

Action Taken No Pass as amended

Motion Made By Sitte Seconded By Hawken

Representatives	Yes	No	Representatives	Yes	No
Chairman Kelsch	✓		Rep. Hanson		✓
Vice Chairman Johnson	✓		Rep. Hunsakor	✓	
Rep. Haas	✓		Rep. Mueller		✓
Rep. Hawken	✓		Rep. Solberg		✓
Rep. Herbel	✓				
Rep. Horter	✓				
Rep. Meier	✓				
Rep. Norland	✓				
Rep. Sitte	✓				
Rep. Wall		✓			

Total (Yes) 19 No 4

Absent 1 (Rep. Hoobler)

Floor Assignment Sitte

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:



**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

**HB 1414: Education Committee (Rep. R. Kelsch, Chairman) recommends AMENDMENTS AS FOLLOWS** and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (9 YEAS, 4 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). HB 1414 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

Page 1, line 1, after "A BILL" replace the remainder of the bill with "for an Act to amend and reenact section 15-20.4-04 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to medical transcription schools; and to provide an expiration date.

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1. Postsecondary educational institutions operating in this state and enrolling ten or fewer students; and
2. Medical transcription schools.

**SECTION 2. EXPIRATION DATE.** This Act is effective through June 30, 2007, and after that date is ineffective."

Renumber accordingly

2005 SENATE EDUCATION

HB 1414

2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1414

Senate Education Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date March 16, 2005

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1	x		0-5190
2	x		5590-end
2		x	0-420
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Patty Wilkins</i>			

**Minutes :** Relating to medical transcription schools; and to provide an expiration date.

**Senator Freborg :** Call the meeting to order on **HB 1414**

**Representative Wrangham :** Introduced the bill, District 8 Representative.

**See attached :** written testimony

**Senator G. Lee :** Is this for just this one institution?

**Representative Wrangham :** To my knowledge this is the only program that is in this situation at this time. There may be other training programs that have started up and they generally give them a year or two to become accredited there may be more out there in the medical transcription field that are operating under temporary authorization, I am not sure.

**Senator Taylor :** Do you know how long this Exact-Med has been under the provisional authorization? I assume this is provisional authorization of Vo-tech.

**Representative Wrangham :** Yes, they are operating under the provisional, two and going on three years and the technical questions they will be better at answering them than I.

**Renee Becker :** Owner of Exact-Med presented some issues to the committee.

**See attached : written testimony and transcription training.**

**Senator Taylor :** You have operating under provision licenser which is in the code right now or provisional authorization. What do you go through for that, there probably needs to be some oversight of the programs to make sure they are legitimate.

**Renee Becker :** I had to show the state that we had adequate refund policy set in place, keeping adequate student records, we need to bonded for an actual amt. of % of last yrs. revenue. I need to provide a financial report for my accountant yearly.

**Senator Taylor :** We do have a sunset on this as you know, it says that there may be an accreditation program that you think is more affordable in two yrs. b/c I am not sure that anyone here wants to exempt something that deals with patient safety here forever of course.

**Renee Becker :** The industry has really started to become more organized it had not been, AAMT has been around for a long time, and what they have done and b/c of what happened, I know you have seen the adds on TV where learn medical transcription in 6 weeks, not reality, and there are many people buy into those programs and they are not ready to work. I have several myself that went through those and then came to us. The general public does not understand that, they think it is easy and that you type what they say and it isn't. So therefore AAMT has gone and put this educational approval manual together so that they can say that these programs meet our standards this should be a good program and eventually that is where they want to go into

accredited transcription programs and coding programs, but right now they are not ready to do that.

**Senator G. Lee :** What would the cost be? In terms of getting this accreditation?

**Renee Becker :** Between 8 and 12 thousand dollars, I have looked into several different companies and then one is a little bit less, but then you need to provide time where I need to go and travel and then be on a committee to approve other schools. Then be accredited again for two yrs and back at it again, if lucky you may get a five yr at that point. The cost is really really high for a small business.

**Lynelle Lawler :** Former student of Exact-Med

**See attached : written testimony**

**Senator Flakoll :** Do you have to have any type of insurance, in the event that you made a mistake?

**Lynelle Lawler :** The Doctor does not sign their name to my report unless they approve what I have typed, so no I don't have insurance myself.

**Senator G. Lee :** Are you in a class room setting when you are going to school but you have so many students in a class and you learn to type that way or how does that work or where do you go to school at?

**Lynelle Lawler :** I did the first part of the program which is the anatomy and medical terminology which is in the classroom and there were some students there, some of the transcribing you do at home but there is some that you do in the office classroom.

**Senator G. Lee :** Do you type from home now?

**Lynelle Lawler :** Yes, I do.

**Testimony in opposition of bill :**

**Debra Huber** : Administrator for Educational Equity and Private Post secondary Institutions for the State Board for Career and Technical Education.

**See attached : written testimony**

**Mike Hillman** : Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs

**See attached : written testimony**

**Senator Taylor** : You brought up the difference between a Trade VS Fully Educational program, in the University system, are there other what we would consider a trade, whether it is like mechanics where those are also accredited. Then they would have credits that could be transferred into a Baccalaureate program or Associates degree?

**Mike Hillman** : Yes, we have our two yr. campuses in our system that have a number of trade and occupational programs. A lot of hands on type of programs that earn academic credits that eventually result in some kind of degree, diploma or certificate.

**Senator G. Lee** : Has the board worked with this school to get their accreditation, what is the issue that they haven't been able to gain?

**Mike Hillman** : Although we have worked closely with the State Board for Career and Technical Education in terms of Institutions, we have not specifically have worked on this one. I am not sure I am qualified to answer this question.

**Dr. Sharon Hart** : President of NDSCS (North Dakota State College of Science)

**See attached : written testimony**

**Senator Taylor :** What is the different in cost of the two schools one being accredited and the other is not? With a student graduating from your program say at a level four VS the other school. Is there a big difference in cost for these students.

**Dr. Sharon Hart :** There is a very big difference in cost. Our program is 480 hrs. 30 to 40 credits in length which would be approximately less than a thousand dollars. We also offer a program as well, if they want to do it over, we have a program online that we are doing to meet with the students the needs of ND. That program would be more.

**Senator Taylor :** I am sure you would know Exact-Meds but I can find that out later.

**Senator G. Lee :** What is the demand for these transcriptionists? Are your students finding jobs easily or is there a need for more programs?

**Dr. Sharon Hart :** Yes, there is a tremendous need for medical transcriptionists out there. The more the demand that is out there, we are able to provide additional classes for that. In addition to that we have other two yr. colleges in the state who are also offering this program regionally to help with that need out there.

**Helen Overbo :** Dean for Academic and Student Affairs at Williston State College.

**See attached : written testimony**

**Wayne Kuntz :** Director of the Dept. of Career and Technical Education. I would respond to

**Senator G. Lee** question, we have worked with Exact-Med, and they have had three yrs. of provisional, this June will be their fourth yr that they will be coming back to us in terms of asking for provisional authorization to operate. The policy is set forth in terms of accreditation when they first apply, with every subsequent yr. that we work with them they have chosen a different accredit ors to look at, and so in the three different plans that we have had there are

three different accredit ors listed. I do understand that they are waiting for this other one to potentially go down that road, but at this point they are not. I wanted to make it clear, that we have been working with them.

**Senator Freborg** closed the hearing on **HB 1414**

**Senator Erbele** : I am ready to make a motion for a **Do Pass** on **HB 1414**

**Senator Seymour** : I am going to have to recuse myself from this b/c I wasn't here.

**Senator Freborg** : I am sorry Senator Seymour if you are here, you must vote.

**Senator Seymour** : OK

**Senator Freborg** : There are very rare circumstances where we would be able to leave you out.

**Senator Seymour** : That is OK, no problem.

**Senator Freborg** : second this motion as he passed the gavel over to Senator Flakoll.

**Discussion :**

**Senator Erbele** : I just think that comments of the bill are doing a good job they are at a level four in their training, they are not asking for this indefinitely, moving forward, so therefore we can sunset it. Let the free market system work, if they are turning out students that can't do the job. They won't be working very long, apparently they are working and have physicians that are highering them keeping them and liking them, if they aren't any good, they wouldn't be there. Let the market determine this, rather than a plaque on the wall, that says they have had a whole bunch of classes. To me a lot of those certificates and accreditation programs is nothing more than papers on a theory.

**Senator Seymour** : I disagree with what he just said, accreditation is very important.



**Senator Freborg :** I had a little problem this morning with the testimony, especially with the people in higher education. In all the yrs. that I have been here with the exception of the last two or three sessions, we have continually had a problem within the system of credits not transferring from one of our institutions to another, and they tell us what a great job they are doing. This is one of the reasons that these students should not be able to go to that school without being accredited, b/c they are going to waste time in their lives, getting an education that is not accepted. I will support this motion b/c I think there is enough problem with in the system without pointing the finger at some like these. I don't think we give students enough credit, I think that most of these people will be careful where they go, and make sure the institution is quality and has produced jobs for these people. I didn't believe a lot of what I heard was proper considering.

**Senator Taylor :** Their concern with an accreditation right now that they are looking at would cost eight thousand dollars, I will through a couple numbers out here. They have been in operation for three yrs. and it says here 127 students, I certainly am not big on students having to pay more, but if there is a value in the accreditation, it would work out to 180-190 dollars per student for them to cover the cost of that accreditation, it is a thirty eight hundred dollar program, the lady from Exact-Med told me. If they can do 30 students in a year, that is one way she could cover the cost for accreditation, then you have to sell ourselves either for the institution or the students, is the accreditation worth anything, they mentioned the transfer of credits. When I heard the difference in transcriptions between basic and level four. That convinced me that they should be accredited, these are my medical records that someone is going to use to doctor me. I certainly would like to have someone who is coming from an accredited program, this is probably a good

program, but I don't think we necessarily leave it to the free market. By the time the free market reacts to someone who made a mistake, it might be too late for me, if I am under the knife or got the wrong prescription, I think this is a backward step to carve this out of accreditation. We should have programs that are achieving higher standards rather than say well eight thousand is too much, we want you to ascribe to a lower standard.

**Senator Freborg :** Senator Taylor maybe I didn't hear right or didn't understand, I don't hear well and I don't understand much but I believe you asked the question about, are you insured from the state? What was the answer?

**Senator Taylor :** It wasn't my question, but when she did answer she said she was not insured, but the doctor had to sign off on it.

**Senator Freborg :** That the doctor was responsible and that they read the transcribed report prior signing it?

**Senator Taylor :** That's true.

**Senator Flakoll :** I would have to question on accuracy, one thing they talked about is that they reference Interstate Business College. I didn't think that had a thing to do with today's discussion. A lot of problems unrelated to that. I had no clue what she was talking about.

**Senator Taylor :** When I read the bill, when we deal with the section of minimum standards and exceptions, it looks also like this section is where we have the language, this has to do with preauthorization so to speak, this institution has been under that preliminary preauthorization for three years. If they are exempted from this section, by adding this medical transcription schools. The way I read it, it also exempts them from even that provisional authorization. That's where it is, if they are exempted they are also exempted for having a provisional authorization. The

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Senate Education

Bill/Resolution Number **HB 1414**

Hearing Date March 16, 2005

Career and Tech Board, I am sure they are listed as a registered as a business and they have refund policies and all these things. Maybe we can ask council, I am nervous about that.

**Senator Freborg** : I don't think that they are exempted, but you have made a good point. Maybe we should confer with council prior to action on the bill. I don't think we would want that to happen. Senator Erbele would you be willing to hold the motion until we get some more information?

**Senator Erbele** : Yes, I am willing

**Senator Freborg** : Senator Taylor perhaps you could visit with council.

**Senator Freborg** closed the meeting.

2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

BILL/RESOLUTION NO. HB 1414

Senate Education Committee

☐ Conference Committee

Hearing Date 03/21/05

Tape Number	Side A	Side B	Meter #
1		x	2400-5270
Committee Clerk Signature <i>Patty Wilkins</i>			

**Minutes :** Relating to medical transcription schools; and to provide an expiration date.

**Senator Freborg :** Called the meeting to order on **HB 1414**

**Senator Flakoll :** Do we know anything new on this at all?

**Senator Freborg :** If possible we could get a couple people back, b/c there seems to be some controversy on this bill.

**Senator Taylor :** I mentioned once that if they are exempted from this section that it implies here this would also exempt them from provisional authorization? I talked to Wayne Kutzer and he said that would not be the case, so if we would grant this exemption they would still have to have provisional authority. Bonding and different things that they are suppose to have, this doesn't alleviate a lot of my concerns that I have but it does answer one concern.

**Senator Freborg :** I think that Rep. Wrangham said that in his testimony.

**Senator Flakoll :** I think this comes down to whether or not we want to extend the provision for authorization for the next two years.

**Senator Freborg :** Correct.

**Senator Flakoll :** Based upon the confusion if that is what you want to call it. On line 19 this only applies to medical transcription schools that have a provisional authorization. Would that be a more appropriate, or would this be less of a problem if it passed with that language in there. I don't know if we should amend this or not. I would like this to be a motion.

**Senator G. Lee :** What exactly is the motion?

**Senator Freborg :** On line 19 medical transcription school that have a provisional authorizations.

**Senator Erbele :** That is saying then that if they currently have a provisional license that it is extended for two yrs. not allowing for any new people coming in and getting a provisional license they have to apparently have to have one?

**Senator Freborg :** I think currently they have to have one right now or they wouldn't be in business, so they have it today. I don't know if they need the preauthorization annually or what. I would assume there is a time line on the authorization.

**Motion failed due to no second.**

**Senator Taylor :** What I see here is that they are under provisional authorization, the feeling I got from the board in their testimony and some conversations. Outside of testimony is that they have been pretty cooperative and they have gotten an authorization every year, three yrs. going now. I don't know as we need legislative action to guarantee them two more yrs. the board is willing to work with them. This would set a bad precedence to have folks go around an agency with them to get a legislative carve out. The rules are here for a reason, and the accreditation has some value.

**Senator Freborg :** How many places for some of you people involved in this than I , can receive accreditation from?

**Senator Seymour :** There are different kinds of course the overbearing of the North Central Association, Higher Learning Commission, do a whole institution, there is NCI and High School K-12. In Higher Ed they have businesses can be accredited and medical, so there is many. These people I am not sure, with the accreditation.

**Senator Freborg :** I know there are several. I believe that or I think these people worked toward accreditation, with different accredit ors and never completed it. Saying this very carefully.

**Senator Flakoll :** We did receive some information from Renae Becker for distance education training council. The Commission of Career and Schools, College of Technology, Bureau of Health Education Schools, at 7,820.00. North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement, of 8,120.00 plus dues. There were four of them shown here. The AMT which is Association of Medical transcription. So there are quite a few. American Health Information Management Association, like 50 thousand members.

**Senator Freborg :** Would there be merit in moving the sunset up one yr. To assure they have one yr for being accredited?

**Senator G. Lee :** Doesn't it already say that as long as they are showing a good faith effort they don't need this. If the company is willing to work with the state in terms of getting accredited you won't need it.

**Senator Freborg :** They deal with one agency to become accredited, how far they go I don't know, then they change agencies, this takes time, I understand that this has happened about 3 or 4

times, which this delays the process. Will they continue to change accredited agencies simply to delay the process. Are they then showing good faith, they never seem to complete the process.

**Senator G. Lee :** I know I was in and out during testimony, but it seemed to me that they were trying to avoid the cost to the accreditation of 8 thousand or whatever the number was. One of the students testified they are making 25 dollars and hour. The number of students they have it seems like they could spread that 8 thousand dollars into that student tuition or whatever they get pretty easily, if that is the outcome in the end, being able to get that kind of a salary in doing this, it didn't seem like it would be that much. I think these people are essential to the medical community in terms of being able to do this effectively and timely. My business uses all kinds of these people, I think accreditation is a minimal effort that they have to put forward in terms of, it seems they were trying to avoid the cost. I might have missed something, I think accreditation standards are valuable in terms of insurance that they are a good school.

**Senator Freborg :** I believe the Doctor that told us this morning that these people are in great demand.

**Senator G. Lee :** They are hard to get.

**Senator Freborg :** They don't have enough of them.

**Senator Flakoll :** On the same lines it seemed or they felt that the cost was more than they could bear based upon the 127 students that graduated, in the number of years they have been in business, I think they were trying to buy some time to allow yet another accreditation system that is rigorous enough and be less costly to them.

**Senator Flakoll :** Trying to make the bill better I would be less concerned if the bill were to pass with a one yr. expiration date than I would with expiration date after two yrs. I would move that amendment.

**Senator G. Lee** second this motion

Discussion on the motion :

**Senator Taylor :** I think this school has another year anyway with the board if they don't get accredited, they have been granted three yrs so far and have shown enough good faith effort that carving them out for a yr. here I would probably have to vote for it, I don't know as it will really accomplish anything.

**Senator Freborg :** Are you changing the date Senator Flakoll?

**Senator Flakoll :** I would be changing the date on line 20 instead of the yr. 2007 and to make it 2006. So if you don't like the bill, this should make it more palatable.

**Senator Freborg :** The motion is to amend line 20 to change 2007-to 2006 to engrossed HB 1414.

**Hearing no other discussion the clerk took the roll, Vote: 3 yea, 3 nay 0 absent.**

**This motion failed.**

**Senator G. Lee** made a motion for a **Do Not Pass**

**Senator Seymour** second this motion.

**Senator Erbele :** Don't we have a motion that we had just held?

**Senator Freborg :** Could have had.

**Senator Erbele :** I believe I made a motion for a Do Pass and we were just going to hold it?



Senator Freborg checked with the committee clerk and her records show that the motion was held.

Senator Freborg : We will have to back up.

Senator G. Lee withdrew his motion.

Senator Erbele did make the motion for a Do Pass and Senator Flakoll had second this motion.

Senator Freborg : This motion did come prior to adopting the Senator Flakoll amendment on line 20.

Senator Flakoll : said we went to further amend, but nothing stuck, first one no one would second it and the second one failed 3-3.

Senator Freborg : You are right.

#### Discussion

Hearing none, clerk took roll on a Do Pass on engrossed HB 1414, Vote: 2 yea, 4 nay, 0 absent

Senator G. Lee moved for a Do Not Pass on HB 1414

Senator Taylor second the motion.

#### Discussion,

Senator Erbele said he would reconsider his vote on Senator Flakoll amendment for a one yr. if we can get the Do Pass. I am throwing my cards on the table.

Hearing none, clerk took the roll, Vote: 3 yea, 3 nay, 0 absent.

Senator Flakoll made a motion to send engrossed HB 1414 WCR (without committee recommendation)

Senator G. Lee second the motion.

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Senate Education Committee

Bill/Resolution Number HB 1414

Hearing Date 03/21/05

**Hearing no other discussion, clerk took the roll, Vote : 6 yea, 0 nay, 0 absent.**

**Senator G. Lee will carry this bill**

Date: 2  
Roll Call Vote #: 1

**2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES**  
**BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 41/4**

Senate	SENATE EDUCATION	Committee
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☐ Check here for Conference Committee

**Legislative Council Amendment Number**

Action Taken line 20 - 2007 to 2004

Motion Made By Hakoll Seconded By Lee

[illegible]

Total (Yes) 3 No 3

Absent Filed

## Floor Assignment

**If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:**

Date: 3/21/05  
Roll Call Vote #: 2

**2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES**  
**BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1414**

Senate SENATE EDUCATION Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken Do Pass

Motion Made By Erbele Seconded By Sen Flakoll

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
CH- SENATOR FREBORG	✓		SENATOR SEYMOUR		✓
V-CH- SENATOR G. LEE		✓	SENATOR TAYLOR		✓
SENATOR ERBELE	✓				
SENATOR FLAKOLL		✓			

Total (Yes) 2 No 4

Absent Failed

Floor Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 3/21/05  
Roll Call Vote #: 3

2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES  
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1414

Senate SENATE EDUCATION Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken Do Not Pass

Motion Made By Lee Seconded By Taylor

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
CH- SENATOR FREBORG		✓	SENATOR SEYMOUR	✓	
V-CH- SENATOR G. LEE	✓		SENATOR TAYLOR	✓	
SENATOR ERBELE		✓			
SENATOR FLAKOLL		✓			

Total (Yes) 3 No 3

Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Floor Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

Date: 3/21/05  
Roll Call Vote #: 4

**2005 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES**  
**BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 1414**

Senate SENATE EDUCATION

Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number \_\_\_\_\_

Action Taken

engrossed 1414 WCR

Motion Made By

Flakoll

Seconded By

Lee

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
CH- SENATOR FREBORG	✓		SENATOR SEYMOUR	✓	
V-CH- SENATOR G. LEE	✓		SENATOR TAYLOR	✓	
SENATOR ERBELE	✓				
SENATOR FLAKOLL	✓				

Total

(Yes)

6

No

0

Absent \_\_\_\_\_

Floor Assignment

Im - Lee

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE (410)  
March 22, 2005 2:28 p.m.

Module No: SR-52-5774  
Carrier: G. Lee  
Insert LC: . Title: .

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE**

HB 1414, as engrossed: Education Committee (Sen. Freborg, Chairman) recommends  
**BE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION** (6 YEAS,  
0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). Engrossed HB 1414 was placed on the  
Fourteenth order on the calendar.

2005 TESTIMONY

HB 1414



**Testimony on HB1414**  
**By Representative Dwight Wrangham**

Chairman Kelsch and members of the Education Committee

I introduced HB1414 to better align our accreditation regulation to specific training programs in a way that that best helps the students.

Precise Medical Transcription training, as is done by Exact Med, should not be classified as a post-secondary education program.

Exact med does not hold out to offer general education, they do not hold out that they teach basic skills such as English, spelling etc. They offer medical transcription training to individuals who already possess such basic skills.

Typically the individual may have already attended a post secondary institution but does not posses adequate skills to find suitable employment.

Exact med trains these individuals to a higher level of proficiency, thus improving their employment opportunities.

I urge you to pass HB1414 and exempt medical transcription training centers from the present accreditation requirements. Present available accreditation programs serve no good purpose in this instance. Present accreditation programs do not offer any competence testing of trained individuals.

There is an accreditation program being developed which will have the ability to test individual students as to their proficiency. You will hear more about this program from Renee Becker.

When this new accreditation program is fully developed we may want to take another look at this exemption. Therefore, if you feel an amendment to this bill, sun setting it in 4 year, is something you want to do, that would be fine. This would ensure we take another look at it in 4 years.

Thank You for your time and for allowing me to share my thoughts with you. I will try to answer a questions, however, there are people here to testify who may be better able to answer your questions.

HB 1414  
1 Feb 05

## EXACT-MED TRANSCRIPTION TRAINING

3333 E Broadway, #1218

Bismarck, ND 58501

(701) 355-4608

Renee Becker, Owner

Good Morning!

Madame Chairwoman and Committee Members:

I started Exact-Med Transcription Training three years ago in order to train level 4 medical transcriptionists. The industry of medical transcription has evolved greatly over the past 20 years, but the education side of it has not.

I am here to address the committee to ask for an exemption from the postsecondary educational institution status, which would require accreditation. We ask that Exact-Med be able to participate in the "Medical Transcription Program Approval" set out by The American Association for Medical Transcription (AAMT):

AAMT advocates on behalf of medical transcriptionists to legislative and regulatory agencies as well as sets the standards pertaining to the industry. They have been instrumental in getting the industry organized. Members of AAMT include training institutions, employers, transcriptionists, as well as students. AAMT is also the agency, which offers the credentials of a Certified Medical Transcriptionist. Other responsibilities include educating their members on HIPPA and Joint Commission guidelines, coordinating yearly seminars and workshops, training materials and monthly journals. Basically, they are the "hub" of our industry. I have enclosed the final draft of the "Medical Transcription Program Approval Manual" for you to review.

In a quick overview of this manual, Exact-Med will need to provide evidence of:

- Adequate financial resources
- Certified medical transcription instructors to teach and develop curriculum
- Maintenance adequate student records
- Grievance and refund policies in place
- Adequate testing methods pertaining to medical transcription
- Description of our job placement
- Provide documentation that we are registered with the North Dakota Secretary of State office
- Nondiscriminatory practices
- Provide copies of all advertisements and promotions

### **ATTACHMENT A: AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION: "Program Approval Manual" and "Approval Process"**

It is a sad fact, but in reality most graduates of the standard college education programs for medical transcription do not have adequate skills as they lack the essential component

of hands-on practical transcription experience. According to Peggy Doyle, owner of OSI Transcription, a large national medical transcription employer, she states that she needs to screen between 30 to 40 applicants prior to finding an applicant with adequate skills for level 4 transcription.

Our training program is designed different in that it is "competency" based versus credit-hour/seat-time based. We train our students to be able to transcribe acute care, level 4 medical transcription, including all medical specialties, foreign speaking dialects and all types of hospital level dictation. Level 4 transcription is the most difficult in that it deals with intricate operative reports such as neurosurgery or cardiothoracic surgery. This could mean that at one moment a transcriptionist will be transcribing an operative report such as a hemilaminectomy (back surgery) and the next dictation may be a very detailed heart transplant.

The only way that this type of transcription can be learned, is by practical hands-on experience and it **cannot** be "book" learned.

My experience as a medical transcriptionist over the past 15 years has given me the understanding of the entire business where as from an educational perspective it is very misunderstood as to what is **now** required of a transcriptionist. As the medical industry has become more advanced, the college based education programs have not. Therefore, the industry is now requiring 2+ years experience prior to hiring newly trained transcriptionists.

**\*GRADUATES:** The industry standards are such that a transcriptionist maintain an accuracy of 98% or higher transcribing acute care, level 4 dictation. As our program is competency based, a student does not complete the training until they have achieved these industry standards.

All of our graduates who have achieve these standards are assisted in finding employment and at this time we have been able to place 100% of our students. I might add, that many of these who are now employed live in small communities throughout North Dakota.

**ATTACHMENT B: List of graduates and current students:**

**\*ACCREDITATION:** In researching the accreditation process, several problems have arisen pertaining to the type of training we offer, as well as the size of our business.

1. **Cost:** \$8000 to \$12,000. We will initially only receive an accreditation for 2 years and then need to undergo these costs again. Over the past two years of training, we averaged completion of 15 to 20 students per year, so the cost is much more than we can absorb.

2. **Size of business:** We are a small local business. We operate with two (2) employees. In order to undergo the accreditation process, myself, as well as an employee, would need to attend a two (2) day workshop out of state and cover all of the expenses pertaining to this. We do not have employee back-up for this.

3. **No set guidelines for accrediting medical transcription programs:** In researching, accrediting agencies will only accredit the "individual school" **not the "actual program."** To date, there are no set guidelines for accrediting "medical transcription programs."

4. **Employment:** In the industry of medical transcription, graduating from an accredited program holds no benefits and serves the student in no way. **This is a competency based, industry specific, type of employment, and should be regulated by the industry itself.**

**ATTACHMENT C: Accreditation costs.**

**ATTACHMENT D: Letter from Employers:**

- a. Remote MT – Barb Grow
- b. Medigrafix – Kim Crouse
- c. OSI Transcription – Peggy Doyle

In closing, I would ask that consideration be given to the exemption from postsecondary educational institution status.

I have worked hard to establish a reputable training program and I love what I do, and I want to continue. It is a sad reality, but in numerous visits with my accountant and crunching the numbers every which way possible, we may have to consider closing as the costs will far outweigh the benefits.

I appreciate your time and I want to thank each and every one of you for giving me this opportunity to present these issues and I would be more than happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Renee Becker, Owner  
Exact-Med Transcription Training  
3333 E Broadway, #1218  
Bismarck, ND 58501  
(701) 355-4608

**EXACT-MED TRANSCRIPTION TRAINING**

**3333 E Broadway, #1218**

**Bismarck, ND 58501**

**(701) 355-4608**

**Renee Becker, Owner**

**ATTACHMENT A**



*American Association for Medical Transcription*

*Medical Transcription  
Program Approval  
Manual*

accuracy, clarity, consistency, and timeliness, applying the principles of professional and ethical conduct.

## An Overview of AAMT

The American Association for Medical Transcription is the largest association for medical transcriptionists in the world. The overall mission of AAMT is to lead the evolution of medical transcription and to represent and advance the profession and its practitioners. AAMT believes that quality and integrity of transcribed US healthcare documentation is of vital importance. Our purpose is to protect patients through documentation by setting standards of education and practice in the field of medical transcription. This is accomplished by monitoring standards through the AAMT educational program approval process, the AAMT code of ethics, certification, and quality assurance programs that ensure the highest quality, accuracy, and security of US healthcare documentation.

AAMT advocates on the behalf of medical transcriptionists to legislative and regulatory agencies, as well as standard-setting bodies, ensuring that issues of importance to medical transcriptionists and the industry are addressed. AAMT also provides professional development through awareness of medical transcription issues and concerns, through the improvement and application of problem-solving techniques, through leadership opportunities, and by fostering an attitude that promotes the profession of medical transcription.

## An Overview of AHIMA and CAHIIM

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the national association of health information management professionals. The Commission on Accreditation of Health Informatics and Information Management Education (CAHIIM) is the accreditation organization of AHIMA, offering specialized programmatic accreditation in health informatics and information management. Approval for Medical Transcription Programs will be granted by AHIMA's Approval Committee for Certificate Programs in cooperation with AAMT, under the general supervision of CAHIIM.

## What is Certification in Medical Transcription?

Certified medical transcriptionist (CMT) is the professional designation awarded to individuals who have met certification requirements as specified by the American Association for Medical Transcription. AAMT's mastery-level certification examination has been established to recognize individuals with specialized, advanced transcription competencies. Individuals interested in certification should gain substantial transcription experience before taking this examination. It is not recommended for recent graduates who have completed a transcription certificate program and have no other transcription experience. It is not acceptable to use the designation *MT* (medical transcriptionist) or *MLS* (medical language specialist) after one's name because doing so gives the impression that the appellation carries the weight of a professional certification designation. *CMT* is the only recognized professional certification designation for medical transcriptionists, and it may be used only if authorized through the American Association for Medical Transcription.



## Approval Process

An educational program applying for approval by AAMT and AHIMA must complete the following steps:

### STEP 1: LETTER OF INTENT

Parties interested in applying for approval must send a letter of intent and a one-page curriculum synopsis to:

AAMT Education Program Review Team  
100 Sycamore Avenue  
Modesto, CA 95354-0550

The program facilitator at AAMT will review the letter of intent and curriculum synopsis and inform the applicant as to acceptability. Those who are accepted may then proceed with the application and the required accompanying materials.

### STEP 2: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL

All programs must demonstrate and document compliance with the following AAMT Program Approval Standards for Medical Transcription Programs.

.....

1. The organization offering the medical transcription instruction (academic institution, healthcare organizations, private companies, etc.) must confirm that:
  - a. Financial resources are adequate to fulfill obligations to currently enrolled students;
    - Provide statement that school has adequate financial resources for its operation.
  - b. A qualified program director is overseeing the entire program;
    - Minimum of an associate's degree, college or vocational certificate in medical transcription, or experience in the medical transcription profession, with CMT preferred. Experience in coordinating and operating an academic program is preferred, but not required.
  - c. Instruction incorporates current AAMT Model Curriculum;
    - Attach copies of syllabi and official school catalog with effective date. Highlight or underline areas that incorporate current AAMT Model Curriculum.
  - d. The medical transcription program has been in existence a minimum of six months;

- Attach copy of school license, accreditation, or official document from state and/or country where school is located, showing that school has been in existence a minimum of six months.
  - e. Non-discriminatory practices with respect to race, color, creed, sex, age, disabling conditions (handicaps), and national origin are practiced.
    - Provide statement that school is in compliance with Equal Opportunity and Discrimination and Americans with Disabilities Acts.
- 2. The organization must provide evidence that appropriate systems/policies are in place and, when appropriate, published, for determining how:
  - a. Curriculum planning and evaluation (selection of course content, coordination of instruction and supervised professional practice experiences, distance learning and/or web-based modules and instruction) are accomplished.
    - Attach CVs or resumes of all content developers, instructors, and program director.
    - Provide a narrative summarizing curriculum planning and evaluation with proof of utilization of the AAMT Model Curriculum for Medical Transcription.
  - b. Instructors are selected and evaluated.
    - Provide a narrative describing the process by which instructors are selected and evaluated. Attach forms, if applicable.
  - c. A certificate or diploma documenting satisfactory completion of the medical transcription program is granted.
    - Attach a copy of the certificate or diploma.
  - d. Records are maintained for student enrollment and evaluation.
    - Write a narrative describing how records are maintained. These records must be in sufficient detail to document learning progress and achievement.
  - e. Student and/or instructor grievances are addressed according to policy.
    - Attach copy of written policy and procedure.
  - f. Student withdrawal and refunds of tuition/fees, if applicable, are addressed according to policy.
    - Attach a copy of refund policy and/or rules and regulations.
- 3. Announcements, advertisements and promotions must accurately reflect current trends in the medical transcription profession and the program being offered.
  - Submit copies of any and all announcements, advertisements and promotions (including those of an electronic nature) used to promote

the program including, but not limited to, newspaper ads, periodicals, bulletin posts, signs, emails, etc. Please include website addresses.

4. The program must have adequate leadership and management. The program director must possess the necessary qualifications to oversee curriculum management. Responsibilities should be clearly identified in documented job descriptions.
  - Provide copy of program director's CV or resume, as well as a copy of the job description.
5. Content developers must be CMTs through the American Association for Medical Transcription (AAMT) and have a minimum of three years of acute-care or multi-specialty experience. Content developers must demonstrate current knowledge in course content through appropriate professional development activities.
  - Provide copy of the content developer's CV or resume.
  - Provide CMT numbers of content developers for AAMT verification.
  - Provide copy of job description for content developer (s).
6. Instructors for Medical Transcription Practice content area must be CMTs through the American Association for Medical Transcription (AAMT) and have a minimum of three years of acute-care or multi-specialty experience or possess equivalent qualifications.
  - Provide copies of the instructors' CVs or resumes.
  - Provide CMT numbers of instructors for AAMT verification.
  - Provide copy of job description for instructors.
7. The curriculum plan must include:
  - a. Appropriate learning experiences and curriculum sequencing to develop the competencies necessary for entry-level medical transcription practices. Course content and sequencing must be established in accordance with sound educational principles following the current AAMT Model Curriculum for Medical Transcription.
    - Provide a narrative that describes how curriculum planning and evaluation (selection of course content, coordination of instruction and supervised professional practice experiences, distance learning and/or web-based modules and instruction) are accomplished.
    - Provide a copy of the complete curriculum indicating sequencing of courses.
  - b. Appropriate content, reinforced by structured experiences to apply learned principles. The curriculum must include the following content areas or show how appropriate knowledge base is obtained: English Language, Medical Knowledge, Technology, Medicolegal Aspects of the Healthcare Record, and Medical Transcription Practice.
    - Provide narrative materials and/or documentation addressing how the program meets each content area of the criteria. Items to be included are: required resources/reference materials, timelines/time allocations, amount of actual physician dictation in minutes/hours of dictation, and transcription equipment/media utilized.

8. Clearly written course material (syllabi) must be provided to the student, describing course learning objectives and supervised professional practice assignments to be achieved, the frequency of testing, other documented student evaluation, and the competencies required for completion.
  - Provide copies of individual course syllabi which include:
    - course description
    - course learning objectives
    - individual assignments and timelines for completion
    - clearly delineated grading scale and requirements for course completion
    - policy regarding late submission of course work
    - policy regarding retaking course if not "passed"
    - attendance/participation policy
    - course prerequisites or corequisites
  - Provide documentation of requirements for certificate of completion
9. Testing methods (evaluation systems) must include content related to the objectives and competencies described in the curriculum for both didactic and supervised professional practice education components. They must be employed often enough to provide timely feedback of student progress and serve as a reliable indicator of the effectiveness of course design and instruction.
  - Submit sample test of each core content area demonstrating that course competencies are covered in test questions.
  - Submit two sample transcription keys from the Medical Transcription Practice content area.
  - Submit a narrative describing the interaction between the instructional staff and student, including student tracking and provisions for feedback.
10. The institution shall provide a description of the program evaluation plan to include.
  - Job placement data

### **STEP 3: REPORT FORMAT**

The report and any supporting information should be indexed and securely bound in a three-ring binder. Four copies must be provided and shipped with return receipt requested. The report should be organized in the following manner:

1. Copy of Application
2. Title Page
3. Table of Contents
4. Indexed Reports
5. Securely Bound in a three-ring Binder
6. Submit Four Copies

#### **STEP 4: FEES FOR APPROVAL**

Make checks payable to AAMT and submit with your application.

Application for Program Approval Fee - \$1500 (\$1200 for programs affiliated with an AHIMA/CAHIM accredited program) Fee must be submitted with the program's application for approval, and is non-refundable. There is no annual maintenance fee during the term of approval. Payment of approval fees must be in US dollars and paid in full with application.

#### **STEP 5: PROGRAM APPROVAL DECISIONS**

When determining approval decisions, the AAMT and CAHIM will state that a program's compliance is "met" or "not met" based on the AAMT program approval criteria. A formal transcription program assessment report will be provided to the program after completion of the process.

Following are the categories of approval. The approval period is time limited and will expire unless the program reapplies for approval.

**Approval for 3 years:** For programs with no criteria deficiencies. The approval period is time limited and will expire unless the program reapplies for approval.

**Approval Denied:** For applicant programs that do not meet the program approval criteria.

If approval is denied, the Program Approval Review Team will identify in a written report all aspects of the program that are not in compliance. Guidance to the program regarding possible means of meeting the requirements will be available through AAMT. Programs must wait (1) year before reapplying.

Programs receiving approval from AAMT and AHIMA will receive the following:

- Recognition as an AAMT approved school
- Insertion into an AAMT approved school list
- Link from the AAMT and AHIMA websites
- Recognition in AAMT publications
- Wall certificate

**ATTACHMENT B**

## GRADUATES AND CURRENT STUDENTS

Following is a list of cities where our graduates currently live. These graduates are employed with national transcription companies but work from home in their local community.

1. Turtle Lake, ND - 1
2. Bismarck, ND - 7
3. Hazen, ND - 1
4. Hebron, ND - 1
5. Mandan, ND - 4
6. New London, MN - 1
7. Santee, CA - 1
8. Washburn, ND - 2
9. Flasher, ND - 1
10. New Rockford, ND - 1
11. Wishek, ND - 1
12. Glen Ullin, ND - 1
13. Riverdale, ND - 1
14. Fessenden, ND - 1
15. Taylor, ND - 1
16. Carson, ND - 1

We currently have students in towns the following towns: Grassy Butte, ND; Lehr, ND; Jamestown, ND; Carrington ND; Mott, ND; Voltaire, ND; Glenfield, ND; Rapid City, SD; Atlanta, GA; Glen Ullin, ND; Washburn, ND; Wishek, ND; Fargo, ND; Elgin, ND; New England, ND; New Leipzig, ND; Regent, ND; Napoleon, ND; Kintyre, ND, Bismarck, ND; and Mandan, ND

**ATTACHMENT C**



# ACCREDITING AGENCY COSTS

**1. Distance Education Training Council**    \$11,800

1,200 (annual dues)

500 (annual fees)

Additional costs include: Lost work time,  
travel expenses to attend workshop (out of  
state)

Will only accredit for 2 to 3 years initially.

**2. Accrediting Commission of Career  
Schools and Colleges of Technology**    \$10,950

\$900 + .0026% for tuition over \$200,000 annually

Additional costs include: Lost work time and travel  
expenses for myself and another employee to attend  
workshop (out of state).

Will only accredit for 2 to 3 years initially

**3. Accrediting Bureau of Health  
Education Schools**    \$7820

\$1420 (annual dues)

Additional costs will include: Lost work time and  
travel expenses for myself to attend workshop  
(out of state).

Will only accredit for 2 years initially

**4. North Central Association  
Commission on Accreditation and  
School Improvement**    \$8120

\$1725 (annual dues)

Will only accredit for ~~2~~ 3 three years initially  
I will need to volunteer my time to evaluate  
other postsecondary schools.

**ATTACHMENT D**

# RemoteMT

Consulting: Speech Recognition/Medical Transcription    Menforing: Medical Transcription

February 25, 2004

Renee Becker  
Exact-Med Transcription Training  
3111 East Broadway  
Bismarck, ND 58501

Dear Ms. Becker:

I am writing this letter in response to your inquiry to me as to what I look for in an MT when I recruit for MTs to fill positions for various contracts. In my positions for various transcription companies, and as a consultant, I do have the responsibility of finding, testing, and hiring MTs to fill various positions.

It is a well-known fact that most places prefer to hire those MT with two or more years' experience; however, on many occasions, I have worked with student hires. On those occasions, what I look for most are those persons that have been properly trained. The persons that I have ended up hiring have been those that have less book training and more transcription experience, ear training, good spelling skills, and common sense.

I am not interested at all in how much pharmacology book learning they have, or how many hours of anatomy they have, or psychology book learning they have under their belts. I am not even the least bit interested in their grades for the academic portions of the schooling. Grades mean nothing in the real world of transcription.

I want to be able to see a confident person who knows how to use their computer and transcription equipment. I want to see a person who knows about all the technology out there, .wav files, ftp, speech recognition and its implications, expander software, digital handhelds, how to use the Internet correctly for a reference tool. I want to see a person who can take my test, start it without hesitation, transcribe it, use the proper medical reference book to look things for verification, leave blank what they know they do not know, I want to see them run that spell check software and then sit there and proofread their work and turn in a quality medical report they can be proud to put their initials on that is not going to require an hour of QA work at added expense to the company I am hiring them to work for.

Accreditation and CMT mean nothing to me as a recruiter. Some of the worst MTs I have hired have graduated from accredited schools and have their CMTs. It was my honor to have fired them. They wasted my time with their nonsense transcription. Transcription schools need to be run by transcriptionists who know what it takes to produce transcriptionists. As it is now, we are short an estimated 100,000 MTs to cover the untranscribed documentation and the industry will never catch up because the majority of schools are turning out MTs who don't know how to transcribe. The only thing on their resume is the list of endless courses they took that they got a 3.9 GPA and that means nothing to me and nothing to them in the end. Believe me, an A in pharmacology is not going to help any MT in the real world of dictation.

Once they get into a real job, everything they learned in those required courses so that the school can be accredited means nothing. The material doesn't even equate to what real-life transcription is. It serves the student in no way.

instead, the course work needs to be lessened, streamlined, and the transcription portion needs to be enhanced, sophisticated, taken to the next level, more time spent on that portion, lengthened, many more hours of actual transcription experience, and the student needs to graduate from these courses actually knowing how to do what it is they paid to learn so that they can actually go out and find work immediately without the prerequisite two years' experience. Transcription is actually a "trade" not a college course. They are learning to "do something" therefore, in school, they should be doing it.

Sincerely,

Barbara E. Grow



# MediGrafix

MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION SPECIALISTS

1205 Wright Circle, Suite 120  
Omaha, Nebraska 68144  
Operations 402/333-3323  
Fax 402/333-1939  
www.MEDIGRAFIX.com

Stephen D. Stott  
President  
David J. Stott  
Vice President

January 20, 2005

To Whom It May Concern,

MediGrafix to date has hired four very qualified medical transcriptionists from Exact-Med Transcription Training. The new graduates are excellent transcriptionists due to the extensive hands-on training they received from Exact-Med. We currently have relationships with two other colleges whose curriculum is also based on hands on experience that we find the most beneficial for our needs.

Medical transcription is a unique area in which the common style of book teaching cannot produce quality transcriptionists. Typically they lack the practical experience of using medical terminology within their curriculum. However, students will be successful when they are able to have practical application when transcribing medical reports on a daily basis as part of their curriculum.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the medical transcription field will continue to grow and is always in need of qualified candidates. Exact-Med has been able to provide MediGrafix with qualified personnel because of their hands-on training program.

Sincerely,

Kim Crouse  
MediGrafix  
Human Resource Manager

*We set the standard of excellence*



Outsourcing Solutions, Inc.

Outsourcing Solutions Northeast, Inc.

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January 28, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

I have had the good fortune to have hired several employees who have completed their medical transcription training at the Exact Med. These transcriptionists were well trained, well prepared for the medical transcription industry and have been a great asset to our organization.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Peggy Doyle, VP-Employee Development  
Outsourcing Solutions, Inc.  
2717 Cambridge Road  
Lantana, Florida 33462  
866-551-1515/561-641-1313  
Fax. 561-642-1886  
[pdoyle@ositranscription.com](mailto:pdoyle@ositranscription.com)

House Education Committee  
Testimony on HB 1414  
February 1, 2005

Madam Chair, committee members, my name is Wayne Kutzer, Director of the State Board of Career and Technical Education.

We are opposed to HB 1414.

Our Board has the responsibility for administration of NDCC 15-20.4, which is to establish and maintain the educational standards and the quality business practices of private postsecondary educational institutions, for the protection of the citizens of North Dakota.

On Page 2, lines 4 through 10 of this bill, you can see that schools of barbering, cosmetology, nursing, gaming, and auctioneer schools are exempted from regulation by the State Board for Career and Technical Education. However, these professions are regulated under other chapters listed in the law for the board of barber examiners, the state board of cosmetology, the board of nursing, the gaming commission, and the public service commission, respectively. There is no board for the oversight of the medical transcription profession; therefore, neither the schools offering the training nor those practicing in this field would be subject to professional oversight. With passage of this bill, North Dakotans would have more assurance of a good haircut than assurance that their visits to the doctor would be precisely transcribed.

The State Board for Career and Technical Education is responsible, in Sec.15-20.4-03 (8), which I have attached to this testimony, to "require fees and bonds from postsecondary educational institutions in such sums and under such conditions as it may establish".

Currently, the State Board requires all private postsecondary institutions not exempt from regulation to purchase performance bonds to help protect student tuition in the event of a catastrophic closure. Recently, such bond funds were used to arrange a "teach-out" for massage therapy students who would otherwise have been negatively impacted by a school closure. Under this bill, there would be no recourse or protection for medical transcription student tuition.

The State Board for Career and Technical Education is also responsible, in Sec.15-20.4-03 (5) to "receive and cause to be maintained as a permanent file, copies of academic records specified by the board in the event any postsecondary educational institution required to have an authorization to operate under this chapter proposes to discontinue its operation." Under HB1414, there would be no repository for medical transcriptionists' student records. Students would be on their own to ensure that they safeguarded their

own official school records. Based upon the hundreds of requests the department receives from former students for transcripts each year, from closed schools, it can be safely concluded that North Dakotans value this service.

The wording of the bill may also produce unintended results. Currently, coursework in medical transcription is offered to North Dakotans by several private postsecondary institutions authorized to operate in the state: At-Home Professions, accredited by the Distance Education Training Council, Aakers Business College, accredited by the Association for Independent Colleges and Schools, and Exact-Med Medical Transcription, which has submitted a plan for accreditation by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement to our Board in April, 2004. Two of these schools, At-Home Professions and Aakers Business College, offer many more courses of study than medical transcription. The way this bill is worded, it would appear that it is intended to exempt both of these institutions from oversight, entirely, because they both meet the definition: "instructing in the field of medical transcription".

Please note that the schools regulated by the State Board for Career and Technical Education are subject to the requirement for accreditation as dictated in NDCC 15-20.4-04, again which is attached to this testimony. Although the process of accreditation does represent an expense to the business owner, it is invaluable to the individuals paying their tuition and fees for educational services.

When a school attains accredited status by an organization recognized by the US Secretary of Education, this status paves the way for consideration for federal financial aid. Also, students who graduate from legitimately accredited schools may be able to effect transfer of credit to another similarly accredited school. Another demonstration of the value of accreditation to students has come with the passage of *No Child Left Behind*. In recent months, our department has had scores of inquiries from former students who attended closed schools in the state, now employed as teacher aides, who need an associate's degree, are relieved to discover that the schools they attended were accredited. Accreditation by an organization recognized by the US Secretary of Education is the best endorsement that the education being offered is a quality investment by North Dakota students.

It is for all these reasons that we are opposed to, and urge a Do Not Pass for HB1414. I would be glad to answer any questions that you may have.



**15-20.4-03. Board powers and duties.** The board has, in addition to the powers and duties now vested in it by law, the following powers and duties to:

1. Establish and require compliance with minimum standards and criteria for postsecondary educational institutions under this chapter. The standards and criteria shall include quality of education, ethical and business practices, health and safety and fiscal responsibility, which applicants for authorization to operate, or for an agent's permit, shall meet:
  - a. Before such authorization may be issued; and
  - b. To continue such authorization in effect.

The criteria and standards developed will effectuate the purposes of this chapter, but will not unreasonably hinder legitimate educational innovation.

2. Prescribe forms and conditions for, receive, investigate as it may deem necessary, and act upon applications for authorization to operate postsecondary educational institutions.
3. Maintain a list of postsecondary educational institutions and agents authorized to operate in this state under the provisions of this chapter. The list must be available for the information of the public, and must be sent to the superintendents of all school districts, county superintendents of schools, and guidance counselors certified by the department of public instruction.
4. Negotiate and enter into interstate reciprocity agreements with similar agencies in other states, if in the judgment of the board such agreements are or will be helpful in effectuating the purposes of this chapter; provided, however, that nothing contained in any such reciprocity agreement may be construed as limiting the board's powers, duties, and responsibilities with respect to independently investigating or acting upon any application for authorization to operate, or any application for renewal of such authorization to operate, a postsecondary educational institution, or with respect to the enforcement of any provision of this chapter, or any of the rules or regulations promulgated hereunder.
5. Receive and cause to be maintained as a permanent file, copies of academic records specified by the board in the event any postsecondary educational institution required to have an authorization to operate under this chapter proposes to discontinue its operation.
6. Promulgate such rules, regulations, and procedures necessary or appropriate for the conduct of its work and the implementation of this chapter, and to hold such

hearings as it may deem advisable in accordance with chapter 28-32 or as required by law in developing such rules, regulations, and procedures, or in aid of any investigation or inquiry.

7. Investigate as it may deem necessary, on its own initiative or in response to any complaint lodged with it, any person, group, or entity subject to, or reasonably believed by the board to be subject to, the jurisdiction of this chapter; and in connection therewith to subpoena any persons, books, records, or documents pertaining to such investigation. The board may require answers in writing under oath to questions propounded by the board, and may administer an oath or affirmation to any person in connection with any investigation. The board may, after hearing, revoke or suspend authorizations to operate. Subpoenas issued by the board are enforceable by any district court.
8. Require fees and bonds from postsecondary educational institutions in such sums and under such conditions as it may establish; provided, that fees established may not exceed the reasonable cost of the service being provided.
9. Exercise other powers and duties implied but not enumerated in this section but in conformity with the provisions of this chapter which, in the judgment of the board, are necessary in order to carry out the provisions of this chapter.

**Source:** S.L. 1977, ch. 159, § 4; 1999, ch. 165, § 3; 2001, ch. 167, § 1.

**15-20.4-04. Minimum standards - Exceptions.** All postsecondary educational institutions must be accredited by national or regional accrediting agencies recognized by the United States department of education. The board may additionally require such further evidence and make such further investigation as in its judgment may be necessary. Any postsecondary educational institution operating in this state seeking its first authorization to operate may be issued a provisional authorization to operate on an annual basis until the institution becomes eligible for accreditation by a recognized accrediting agency. Upon completion of the accreditation process, the institution shall submit evidence of accreditation, or a substantial good faith showing of progress toward such status. Only upon accreditation shall an institution become eligible for a regular authorization to operate. This section does not apply to postsecondary educational institutions operating in this state and enrolling ten or fewer students.

**Source:** S.L. 1977, ch. 159, § 5; 1983, ch. 82, § 23; 1993, ch. 168, § 2; 1999, ch. 165, § 4.

**Renee Becker**

---

**From:** "Jay Vance" <jay@aamt.org>  
**To:** <renee.exactmed@midconetwork.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 07, 2005 4:48 PM  
**Subject:** AAMT/AHIMA Approval and Accreditation

**Renee, I'd like to clarify some information regarding approval and accreditation for medical transcription training programs. First, it should be understood that the existing approval program is being administered under the auspices of an independent body, the Approval Committee on Certificate Programs, which is made up of representatives of both AAMT and AHIMA. The ACCP will be assessing and approving both medical transcription and coding training programs.**

**As I had mentioned to you on the phone previously, and Claire Dixon-Lee from AHIMA also stated, it is a long-term goal of AAMT and AHIMA to eventually create a new entity similar to the ACCP which would offer accreditation to eligible medical transcription and coding training programs. We feel that the ACCP is the foundation upon which such an accreditation program can be built.**

**I understand that one of the office staff at AAMT was contacted regarding this issue and stated that AAMT did not have plans to offer accreditation in the future. In fact, the individual in question was not privy to all aspects of the ongoing discussions between AAMT and AHIMA, nor was she fully apprised of the exact nature of the ACCP. Technically speaking neither AAMT alone nor AHIMA alone offers approval for MT or coding now; as stated above, the approval process is handled by an independent entity. The same will be true of accreditation in the future; it will be offered by a separate accrediting body.**

**I hope this clears up any confusion surrounding this issue. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 928-329-9761.**

**Jay Vance, CMT  
Technical & Special Projects  
American Association for Medical Transcription**

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Checked by AVG Anti-Virus.**

## **HB1414**

Chairman Freborg and Members of the Education Committee my name is Lynelle Lawler. I am a former student of Exact-Med Transcription Training and I am here in favor of HB 1414

When I completed the program, on July 13<sup>th</sup> 2004, Renee Becker told me about a job opening with The Family Foot and Ankle Clinic here in town and said that she would check into it more for me if I were interested. Was I interested? They had been telling me all along that there would be a job for me when I finished, but I could not believe it could all happen so fast. I started working for the Family Foot and Ankle Clinic on July 15<sup>th</sup> 2004 and now a little over six months later I am making .12/line, which averages out to about \$25/hr. The reason I am able to achieve this is due to the intensive training of the program, the support I was given along the way, and the quick job placement I received. I am proof that the program works. So why would you want to make it change? Change the law instead. Vote yes to HB 1414.

**Renee Becker**

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**From:** "AAMT" <broadcast@aamt.org>  
**To:** <renee.exactmed@midconetwork.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 10, 2005 5:43 PM  
**Subject:** AAMT PRESS RELEASE



## **AAMT AND AHIMA TO APPROVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR MEDICAL TRANSCRIPTION**

**For more information contact:**

Lea Sims, CMT, FAAMT  
AAMT Director of Communications  
904-739-1848  
lea@aamt.org

Theresa Reynolds  
AHIMA Public Relations Manager  
312-233-1159  
theresa\_reynolds@ahima.org

**Modesto, CA, March 10, 2005** - Patient safety concerns, increased demand for quality documentation, and fiscal restraints in the healthcare system have added to the burden of delivering timely, cost-effective medical transcription. These demands on medical transcriptionists have challenged educational programs to better prepare students entering the medical transcription job market. In response, the American Association for Medical Transcription (AAMT) and the American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) have established the first set of educational criteria to monitor the quality of medical transcription education.

"There has been no formal mechanism in place for reviewing or approving medical transcription programs according to objective criteria set forth by educators and practitioners in the field," stated Peter Preziosi, PhD, CAE, Executive Director of AAMT. "The Medical Transcription Program Approval process will allow prospective students to identify programs which have met rigorous criteria for quality in all relevant areas of training, as well as assist employers of medical transcriptionists in selecting graduates from quality programs."

The Medical Transcription Program Approval is modeled after AHIMA's Coding Program Approval process and based on criteria set forth in the AAMT Model Curriculum, 3rd Edition. The Model seeks to promote criteria-based educational programming that produces competent entry-level medical transcriptionists and to provide assurance to the industry of consistent quality outcomes in medical transcription education.

"Enhancing individual patient care through timely and accurate health information is one of the primary goals of AHIMA," stated Claire Dixon-Lee, PhD, RHIA, FAHIMA, vice president of education and accreditation at AHIMA. "Quality health information starts with sound

educational programs. We are pleased to support AAMT on this initiative."

Medical transcription education programs wishing to learn more about the approval process may obtain a free copy of the AAMT Medical Transcription Program Approval Manual at <http://www.aamt.org/StaticContent/Download/MTPAM.pdf>, which provides detailed instructions on how to initiate a request for approval through this process.

*The American Association for Medical Transcription (AAMT) has been the professional organization representing medical transcriptionists since 1978. AAMT sets standards of practice and education for medical transcriptionists, administers a certification program, has established a code of ethics, and advocates on behalf of the profession. There are over 135 component associations of AAMT, each of which holds regular educational meetings and symposia. For more information, visit [www.aamt.org](http://www.aamt.org).*

*The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) is the premier association of health information management (HIM) professionals. AHIMA's 50,000 members are dedicated to the effective management of personal health information needed to deliver quality healthcare to the public. Founded in 1928 to improve the quality of medical records, AHIMA is committed to advancing the HIM profession in an increasingly electronic and global environment through leadership in advocacy, education, certification, and lifelong learning. For information about the Association, go to [www.ahima.org](http://www.ahima.org).*

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**Engrossed HB 1414  
Representative Dwight Wrangham  
March 16, 2005**

**Chairman Freborg and members of the Senate Education Committee**

**Thank you for your time to consider HB 1414. This bill deals with a medical transcription training program that has been operating very successfully under what the department of technical and vocational education calls "a provisional authorization to operate."**

**The problem we wish to solve developed when this private training program was told to gain national or regional accrediting from a agency recognized by the United States department of education in order to get a "regular authorization to operate."**

**Exact Med has operated under the provisional authorization and has complied with all other sections of chapter 15-20.4. The only problem is in section 15-20.4-04. Gaining the accreditation called for in this section is very expensive and in my estimation is totally unnecessary. I do not think it would offer any additional protection or service to students. There is not a standardized test for medical transcription proficiency, a teach out, in the case of a failed training programs is not applicable, and there are no class credits to be transferred.**

**I understand this legislation is only a temporary fix for the problem. This exemption is scheduled to sunset in June of 2007. The permanent answer to this problem is on the horizon, The American Association of Medical Transcription is currently developing an accreditation program that will fit well with these training programs. I understand this will include a standardized test for medical transcription proficiency. That will be a good thing for the students and all medical transcription training programs.**

**By being exempt from this one section of 15-20.4 this training program can continue to operate under what is called a provisional authorization and will continue to be subject to all of the regulations contained in the other 16 sections of this chapter. I am confident that a permanent solution to this problem is on the horizon and thus ask you to support this exemption with the sunset of June 2007.**

Testimony before the Senate Education Committee regarding HB1414  
March 16, 2005

Chairman Freborg  
Members of the Committee

Good Morning,

My name is Debra Huber. I am the Administrator for Educational Equity and Private Postsecondary Institutions for the State Board for Career and Technical Education, which is responsible for the administration of Chapter 15-20.4 of the North Dakota Century Code pertaining to the regulation of postsecondary educational institutions in the state.

At its meeting of February 22, 2005, the State Board for Career and Technical Education expressed formal opposition to HB 1414. Two of the reasons for opposition cited by the Board relate to concerns regarding the operation of substandard schools in the state and a possible violation of the equal protection clause found in the North Dakota Constitution, per suggestion by Lea Ann Schneider, Assistant Attorney General and adviser to the board.

North Dakota statute currently allows private schools to open to the public by meeting minimum standards. Such schools are considered to be "provisionally authorized to operate". When an "institution becomes eligible for accreditation by a recognized accrediting agency", that institution is expected, under the statute, to demonstrate a "substantial good-faith showing of progress toward that status" (NDCC 15-20.4-04).

When the 1977 legislature passed this language, the intent was to protect North Dakota consumers against potentially substandard schools. By insisting that schools become accredited by a "recognized accrediting agency", the lawmakers were ensuring a level of oversight that would provide for the on-going maintenance of quality school operations through the dedication of resources as required to



meet standards. Accreditation visits with on-site review of programs, faculty, equipment and curriculum compel a level of accountability above the minimum requirements a school must meet to offer educational services to the public under a provisional authorization to operate.

A second concern cited by the board is the equal protection clause of the North Dakota Constitution. Article I, section 22 of the North Dakota Constitution states that "all laws of a general nature shall have a uniform operation." The North Dakota Supreme Court has stated that this means that laws must "operate alike upon all who are in like situations." Beleal v. Northern Pacific Railway, 108 NW 33 (ND 1906). HB1414 would allow School A, which has only a medical transcription program to not become accredited. School B, which offers medical transcription along with other programs would have to be accredited. School B's medical transcription program would have to meet accreditation standards, but School A's would not. School B would have to expend the resources required to maintain its accreditation status; School A would not. Is this fair to School B?

In addition to the concerns expressed by the board, the Committee may also wish to consider the concerns of innumerable North Dakota students affected by catastrophic school closures. In the Department of Career and Technical Education, we receive calls and pleas for help from students on a regular basis. We field inquiries from students who have attended private institutions in this state as far back as the 1960's. When students contact us, they invariably want to obtain the answers to two questions: the first is: "Do you have my records?" and the second is: "Did I attend an accredited school?"

When they wish to know if they have attended an accredited school, it is because they are either seeking confirmation of accreditation for employment purposes or they are attempting to transfer credits to another institution.

Here are the contents of an e-mail I received from a former Interstate Business College (IBC) student via the attorney general's office, just last month:

*" I spent \$12000 on an education that is now entirely worthless due to some fraudulent lady. She embezzled all of our money and now Im (sic) stuck with a paid education than cannot transfer elsewhere...Now to find out this twelve grand I spent is worth absolutely nothing to me. I would appreciate some advice, I'm broke, and have a worthless education."*

When I receive such inquiries, I am grateful to the 1977 Legislature, which passed legislation insisting that private postsecondary institutions in our state be legitimately accredited. Because of that legislation, I am able to reassure these students that they have indeed, invested in an accredited education.

In the case of the IBC students, I am happy to be able to inform them that IBC was accredited by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools, an organization recognized by both the US Secretary of Education and the Council on Higher Education Accreditation. Further, due to a State Board for Higher Education admissions policy that took effect November, 2003, these students will have more opportunities than ever before to transfer credits to a public college or university. (See Attachment A: Section 402.4 Admission Policies – Transfer Applicants.)

I certainly hope that Exact-Med Medical Transcription is a sound institution that will operate for many years to come. Departmental records indicate that they have enrolled 127 North Dakota students through April 1, 2004. With this year's enrollment, the total number of affected students is even greater. The decision that the Committee makes will impact each of these North Dakota students.

Medical transcription may be a wonderful occupation, a perfect choice for many North Dakotans. But, as with any occupation, for one reason or another, a certain percentage of students so trained will eventually be looking at other fields. Some will fall victim to cumulative trauma disorders such as carpal tunnel syndrome and be excluded from this occupation for medical reasons. Others will simply become interested in going on for more training, perhaps in some other allied health field. Still others may ultimately be eliminated from the field involuntarily due to advancements in computerized voice recognition technology. (See Attachment B: Bronson Methodist Hospital Selects ScanSoft Dragon Naturally Speaking Medical 8.)

What will become of these students? Based upon first-hand experience in the field of rehabilitation and vocational counseling, I can assure the committee that these medical transcription students will invariably be asking: "Can I build upon the education I have already acquired?" - especially if they are seeking to return to school for additional postsecondary education. When that time comes, I hope the answer will be the same one I can now provide to IBC students: "Yes, you can, because you have attended an accredited school."

On behalf of the State Board for Career and Technical Education, we ask the committee for a vote of "Do Not Pass" on HB 1414.



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## **Bronson Methodist Hospital Selects ScanSoft Dragon NaturallySpeaking Medical 8**

PEABODY, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Feb. 15, 2005--

**Leading Speech Recognition Solution Enables Pathology Department to Reduce Turnaround Time of Critical Patient Reports, Decreases Reliance on Transcription by 95%**

ScanSoft, Inc. (Nasdaq: SSFT), the global leader of speech and imaging solutions, today announced that Bronson Methodist Hospital has implemented ScanSoft(R) Dragon NaturallySpeaking(R) Medical 8, the leading speech recognition solution for medical professionals, to automate transcription within its Department of Pathology. Since implementing Dragon NaturallySpeaking Medical, the department has reduced reliance on manual transcription services by 95%, driving down costs and freeing pathologists and administrative staff to focus on patient care.

Using ScanSoft Dragon NaturallySpeaking Medical, Bronson's entire Pathology department can now create reports in real-time simply by dictating clinical notes directly onto PCs and workstations. Using wireless headsets for added mobility, pathologists are able to move freely from the cutting room to the office while dictating, and transcription is virtually instantaneous. In addition, Bronson has created an extensive Macro library of standard report templates with Dragon NaturallySpeaking, which has increased efficiency in the department, as pathologists can now quickly and easily produce reports simply by speaking a few key words. Prior to deploying Dragon NaturallySpeaking Medical, the Pathology department relied on a four-person administrative support staff to process transcriptions, and reports could take up to 24 hours to turn around. With the entire pathology team now using Dragon NaturallySpeaking, Bronson was able to deploy two of the support staff to other departments within the organization, and the remaining two-person staff is now able to focus on more value-added tasks, such as managing office operations.

"The time savings and the efficiency that we have achieved as a result of using ScanSoft Dragon NaturallySpeaking has been phenomenal," said Jeff Pearson, M.D., Medical Director, Department of Pathology, Bronson Methodist Hospital. "Our entire staff is using the software and we are very pleased with the ease of use, as well as the results. Not only are we able to turn around dictations instantaneously, but we are able to dictate reports more quickly using the macros within Dragon NaturallySpeaking Medical. In doing so, we can get our pathological findings back to the clinicians quickly so that they can determine the best course of treatment for their patients. All of this adds up to better patient care."

ScanSoft Dragon NaturallySpeaking Medical 8 has built-in understanding for more than 300,000 words, and includes 14 pre-made specialty vocabularies, including General Medicine, Pathology, Radiology, Cardiology and Surgery disciplines. Healthcare organizations such as Bronson Methodist Hospital can also easily add their own words to the solution to create fully customized vocabularies. Care providers can take advantage of voice-activated shortcuts, allowing a single word or phrase to automatically populate fields within a document. Dragon NaturallySpeaking can save healthcare organizations thousands of dollars per doctor each year in reduced or eliminated manual transcription costs. Tens of thousands of physicians worldwide use ScanSoft Dragon NaturallySpeaking to achieve substantial time and money savings, enabling them to focus on patient care.

"The healthcare sector is reaping tremendous benefits from the proliferation of speech technologies - the time and cost savings are real, as proven by implementations such as Bronson Methodist Hospital," said John Shagoury, president, ScanSoft Productivity Applications Division. "For large hospitals to specialty departments to individual practitioners looking to boost productivity and save money, ScanSoft Dragon NaturallySpeaking dramatically reduces costs associated with transcription services and other repetitive tasks, freeing up doctors to focus on

improving the quality and efficiency of patient care."

#### About Bronson Methodist Hospital

Bronson Methodist Hospital, Kalamazoo, Mich., is a major medical center with 343 licensed beds and a medical staff of 650. The hospital provides care in virtually every specialty and serves as a regional referral center for southwest Michigan and northern Indiana. In 2000, Bronson completed a \$181 million redevelopment of its campus, which has received numerous national awards for its design and healing environment. Bronson is currently listed by both Working Mother and Fortune magazines as one of the 100 Best Companies to Work For.

#### About ScanSoft, Inc.

ScanSoft, Inc. (Nasdaq: SSFT) is the global leader of speech and imaging solutions that are used to automate a wide range of manual processes - saving time, increasing worker productivity and improving customer service. For more information regarding ScanSoft products and technologies, please visit [www.ScanSoft.com](http://www.ScanSoft.com).

Trademark reference: ScanSoft, the ScanSoft logo, Dragon, and NaturallySpeaking are registered trademarks or trademarks of ScanSoft, Inc. or its subsidiaries in the United States and/or other countries. All other company or product names mentioned may be the trademarks of their respective owners.

The statements in this press release that relate to future plans, events or performance are forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties, including risks associated with market trends, competitive factors, and other risks identified in ScanSoft's SEC filings. Actual results, events and performance may differ materially. Readers are cautioned not to put undue reliance on these forward-looking statements that speak only as of the date hereof.

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# NORTH DAKOTA

## UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

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### SBHE Policies

**SUBJECT:** ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

**EFFECTIVE:** November 20, 2003

**Section:** 402.4 Admission Policies - Transfer Applicants

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1. Institutions must implement campus policies and procedures which facilitate student transfer.
2. Institutions may admit undergraduate applicants who have previously attended one or more postsecondary institutions following their high school graduation. Such an applicant shall be known as a "transfer" applicant. Students progressing from a diploma, certificate, associate or less program to a four-year program on the same campus are treated as transfer applicants for admission purposes.
3. The Chancellor shall adopt procedures governing admission of undergraduate transfer applicants based on the following criteria:
  - A. A transfer applicant who has completed less than 24 semester or 36 quarter hours of transferable credit shall be considered as a beginning freshman applicant.
  - B. Transfer applicants who have completed 24 or more semester or 36 or more quarter hours of transferable credit shall be admitted to the institution if (a) they are in good standing [not on dismissed or suspended status] at their most recent institution attended, (b) present a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale computed on all transferable work attempted [as described in C below] at all colleges and universities previously attended; and (c) satisfy any additional criteria established at the institution for the selective admission of students to the institution or selected institution programs. Transfer applicants who do not meet requirements, (a) or (b), may be evaluated on an individual basis.
  - C. Admission of undergraduate transfer applicants is based on transfer work which is comparable to that of the receiving institution or of such a nature as to prepare students to continue in an equivalent program at the receiving institution. Such courses are normally referred to as transfer or college parallel work. Other courses completed will be used in evaluation for admission in accordance with each institution's policy.
  - D. Transfer courses, as defined in C above, shall be accepted at full value for admission to the colleges and universities (but not necessarily for admission to specific programs nor to satisfy degree requirements) if earned in:
    1. colleges and universities which are members of, or hold candidate-for-accreditation status from regional accrediting associations.
    2. other colleges and universities which offer comparable courses

and programs and are accredited by an accrediting association that is a member of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or U.S. Secretary of Education.

- E. In all cases, residency requirements and the precise amount of transfer credit which is applicable toward a particular degree will be determined by the receiving institution.
- F. Each institution shall make available to transfer applicants a written description of its policies and procedures for transcript evaluation. The description shall identify an individual whom students may contact for transfer information or evaluation.
- G. The State Board of Higher Education shall publish a guide for transfer students and make it available through each institution.
- H. Colleges and universities may award credit for education received from non-collegiate institutions on the basis of the Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experiences in Armed Services, the National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs, and such other published guidelines as appropriate.

**HISTORY:** New Policy. SBHE Minutes, June 26-27, 1985, pg 5381.  
Amendment SBHE Minutes, June 25, 1987, page 5614.  
Amendment SBHE Minutes, March 8-9, 1990, page 5957.  
Amendment SBHE Minutes, January 31, 1991, page 6089.  
Amendment SBHE Minutes, June 19, 1998, page 6903.  
Amendment SBHE Minutes, February 21-22, 2002.  
Amendment SBHE Minutes, November 20, 2003.

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**TESTIMONY FOR PROPOSED HB 1414**  
**The Position of the North Dakota State College of Science**

Testimony given by Dr. Sharon Y. Hart, President, North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton.

**NDSCS is opposed to HB 1414.**

A number of points have been presented in favor of HB 1414. We feel a need to address some of these items.

**The first point is concerning accreditation.** It appears that a leading factor in this proposed legislation revolves around individual companies wanting to avoid the accreditation process. In previous testimony on this bill, statements have been made about the high financial cost of obtaining accreditation. Currently the institutions of higher education in North Dakota that offer training in Medical Transcription are all accredited institutions. While there are significant costs associated with becoming accredited, it is invaluable to the individuals paying their tuition and fees for educational services. We believe that ultimately the benefits for students are worth these costs.

According to the US Department of Education, *The goal of accreditation is to ensure that education provided by institutions of higher education meets acceptable levels of quality.* In order to insure a basic level of quality, the practice of accreditation arose in the United States as a means of conducting non-governmental, peer evaluation of educational institutions and programs. The accreditation process ensures the school has been reviewed in terms of its academics, recruiting, admissions, faculty, and student services. It signals to the public that the institution will provide quality education and continuously work to improve its overall effectiveness and student outcomes.

In addition:

- Accreditation is required for students to gain access to federal funds for grants and loans in the United States.
- Accreditation makes credit transfer among colleges and universities easier.
- Employers look for accreditation status when evaluating credentials of job applicants and offering financial support to employees

**A second point** raised in favor of this legislation spoke in regard to the perception that college-based education programs of medical transcription are inadequate. We strongly disagree with this notion.

- As part of obtaining and maintaining accreditation, educational programs seek **pertinent and current input from business and industry** per Advisory Committee meetings. These industry leaders oversee and review curriculum offerings, providing invaluable insight into their current needs. Our medical transcription advisory committee currently includes members representing many of North Dakota's leading health care facilities (MeritCare, Altru Health Systems and Eide Bailly). Their input has enabled our program to stay in touch with the current needs of the profession.



- Medical transcriptionists must possess strong skills in English grammar, spelling, proofreading, and editing. These skills are a fundamental part of the "hands-on" training required in medical transcription programs and an integral part of pre-employment testing of medical transcription applicants. We strongly believe that a student cannot be trained in medical transcription unless there is also a focus on the **general education skills** of English, grammar, spelling and in medical terminology. These are basic skills we cannot assume students already possess.
- A common misconception is that almost all the courses offered at accredited institutions are "seat time" courses where students do not get the needed hands-on practical transcription experience. **Training at the North Dakota State College of Science is "hands-on" and "competency-based"**. Our Medical Transcription program requires a minimum of 480 hours of transcription training.

A **third point** raised in favor of this legislation spoke in regard to the perception that employers are dissatisfied with the quality of medical transcription graduates. We again strongly disagree with this notion.

Our Medical Transcription program consistently has a high placement rate for our graduates and health care facilities have expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the skill level of applicants, who are graduates of NDSCS' Medical Transcription program. For example, Eide Bailly, administered pre-employment testing to 4 NDSCS medical transcription students in May 2004 who were interested in positions with Eide Bailly. Eide Bailly's quality transcription level, in order to be considered for employment, is 96%. Of the 4 students who tested with Eide Bailly, all passed the written testing and 3 met the 96% quality level of transcription with scores of 96.96%, 98.16%, and 98.46% respectively.

It is for all these reasons that we are opposed to, and urge a **Do Not Pass for HB1414**. We have provided you additional supporting data. I would be glad to answer any questions that you may have.

### Other Supporting Data:

Medical Transcriptionists are medical language specialists who interpret and transcribe dictation by physicians and other healthcare professionals about patient assessment, workup, therapeutic procedures, clinical course, diagnosis, prognosis and other medical processes. Their work documents patient care and facilitates delivery of healthcare services. They edit dictated material for grammar and clarity.

Medical Transcriptionists may transcribe (type) directly from voice recordings heard through earphones. While a variety of equipment is still used to convert spoken words to hard copy medical reports, most medical transcriptionists today do their work on computers.

The North Dakota State College of Science offers a Certificate program in Medical Transcription, both as an on-campus program and an online program. The curriculum, modeled after the American Association for Medical Transcription 2<sup>nd</sup> Model Curriculum, is reviewed on an annual basis by the Program Coordinator and the Office Administration Advisory Board. The North Dakota State College of Science is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

Medical transcription as an industry is not yet ready to regulate itself.

- The American Association for Medical Transcription will soon be implementing an educational program approval process in an attempt to ensure programs are providing students with entry-level skills, not advanced skills. This is NOT regulation nor is it accreditation and the application for educational program approval is voluntary, not required.
- A person does not have to be licensed or certified in order to perform medical transcription in the United States.

### Unsolicited comments from NDSCS Medical Transcription Program graduates:

"I feel that the training and education through your program at NDSCS was excellent. I have been working for Total eMed for the past 6 months. I absolutely love working as a transcriptionist. It is the most interesting job I have had..." *Lori Seaborn, October 2002*

"You have done a great job with this program and thanks to you, people like me can enjoy a career in medical transcription." *Karla Waloch, November 2002*

"I'm home from the interview at the hospital in Fergus Falls....the lady was impressed! She said I knew more abbreviations than anyone she'd ever given the pre-employment test to. She also said she had never had anyone spell herniorrhaphy correctly...she then had me work on a dictation from one of the doctors right there in the hospital...it really was relatively easy compared to some of the advanced transcriptions we did in class. I brought my medical transcription quality log along to the interview, and she told me she was quite impressed with all the different types of reports I had transcribed. She seemed really surprised to not find errors in spelling, format, punctuation, or grammar..." *Stacey Neufeld, June 2003*

"Once again, THANK YOU for all that you have taught me. (My trainer at MeritCare) and I agree 100% that NDSCS totally prepared us and that NDSCS is #1. We had almost 500 hours of transcription time, whereas NW Tech had less than 200 hours. Wow!" *Cheri Deplazes, August 2003*

"I started on August 23 (at MeritCare after graduating in May)....my quality score for the last 3 months has been 98%. I just today got an email from my lead (supervisor) praising me for my work and how glad she was to have me. Just wanted to thank you for emphasizing work on headings, formats, and **especially** semicolons, as much as I hate them! My first week on the job, my trainer came and told me she was blown away at how much I knew about grammar and how it was amazing because she said it takes most people their whole training period plus more time to get that! (so thanks!)" *Heather Richards, October 2004*

# **NORTH DAKOTA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**

## **Testimony to Senate Education Committee In Opposition of HB 1414**

**Mike Hillman, Vice Chancellor for Academic  
and Student Affairs**

*MARCH 16, 2005*

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Good Morning Chairman Freborg and Members of the Senate Education Committee. For the record, my name is Mike Hillman, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs with the North Dakota University System. I am testifying in opposition to HB1414 based on formal action taken by the State Board for Higher Education at it's March 2005 meeting.

The State Board for Career and Technical Education is given the authority in NDCC Chapter 15-20.4 to regulate post-secondary educational institutions operating in North Dakota. The law is important in protecting the rights of students. Students attending non-accredited institutions often find themselves at a dead end when the school closes, or, when they decide to continue their education as most students do. Accreditation status assures a minimal level of quality that provides a basis for transfer of academic credits and documentation of educational attainment. Eliminating the requirement that all post-secondary institutions make good-faith progress towards accreditation would remove North Dakota's safety net for post-secondary students. The State Board for Career and Technical Education does not have the staff resources or specific expertise to provide quality assurance for dozens of specific post-secondary program content areas. State law currently requires that the expertise on adequate program quality come through the accreditation process. Please support the State Board of Higher Education's request to keep this basic assurance of quality in place by recommending "Do Not Pass" on HB1414.

Testimony before the Senate Education Committee regarding HB 1414  
March 16, 2005

Chairman Freborg  
Members of the Committee

My name is Helen Overbo, Dean for Academic and Student Affairs at Williston State College.

Williston State College opposes **HB 1414** and I will address points presented in favor of the bill relating to **accreditation, college based programs, and employer satisfaction.**

**Accreditation**

The legislation proposes to exempt Medical Transcription schools from accreditation. **"Accreditation" is a review of the quality of higher education institutions and programs. In the United States, accreditation is fundamental assurance to students, families, government officials, and the press that an institution or program provides a quality education.** In addition to regional accreditation, many programs offered at North Dakota institutions are accredited, certified, or approved by national organizations assuring they meet national standards as established by the professional organizations. Attaining and maintaining accreditation is expensive and time consuming, but necessary to assure students that quality is maintained.

With 35 years experience in higher education in North Dakota, I know transferability of credits **was** an issue in North Dakota. Through encouragement from the legislature, university system leadership, and commitment from the campuses, transfer for students attending North Dakota colleges has become an even more positive experience within the university system and to other states' public, private, and tribal colleges.

In 2003 the North Dakota State Board of Higher Education expanded policy 402.4 to allow and encourage colleges to accept credits from colleges and universities not only having regional accreditation, but those having approval from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or the U. S. Secretary of Education. Because each of these entities is accredited, we know they are providing a quality education to their students. The emphasis is no longer on **who** is accrediting the educational institutions. The concern is now that they are required to meet standards of quality by the recognized agency.

In an effort to advance in their positions; employees are often required to further their education. Assuring they have had a quality educational experience is critical as they continue to advance. The costs of starting over, because students received their education from a non-accredited school in the past, is extremely high in terms of time, money, and energy.

## College Based Programs

Accredited programs enable students to utilize earned credits toward their goals. Ability to count credits serve student needs as they continue to learn, grow, and change their educational and professional goals. Students can transition from an accredited medical transcription school to other related programs, complete management or entrepreneurship courses to become managers or business owners, or education courses to become instructors. Students electing different majors can use the medical transcription credits as electives to meet graduation requirements. Without quality assurance at all educational training institutions, students will not easily be able to continue advancing in their career.

Many students change their mind or decide midway through the program they would rather pursue another career. What happens to these students attending a non-accredited program? Students training in accredited programs can use the credit, knowledge, and skills toward other programs to continue their education rather than starting over.

## Employer Satisfaction

Employers are satisfied with the quality of the graduates from accredited programs. Williston State medical transcription graduates are employed in hospitals, clinics, and online companies. Depending on their level of skill and education, WSC graduates are employed as transcriptionists, proofreaders, managers, and instructors. Employers seek referrals of students completing the medical transcription program for employment.

**Passing HB 1414** sets precedence for other programs to move to North Dakota to avoid accreditation and recruit and train students without providing assurance the quality meets national standards. Considerations I ask you to think about in making a decision regarding HB 1414 include:

- Is it in the best interest of students to allow non-accredited schools to operate in the state knowing their students will have to start over to change careers or advance to other positions?
- What compelling evidence exists to demonstrate that exempting medical transcription schools from accreditation will best serve our students?

Please consider what is best for students and employees; not just for reaching short-term goals, but for reaching changing, long-term goals throughout life. For these reasons, WSC urges a **Do Not Pass for HB1414**.