

Promoting a credentialing requirement for the profession will send a clear message with healthcare delivery that healthcare documentation specialists have met minimum standards to engage in a risk management role. – Credentialing Candidate Guide

RHDS/CHDS Study Group Guide

*Suggested Format and
Curriculum Guidelines*

Association for Healthcare Documentation
Integrity



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INTRODUCTION

The success of an RHDS or CHDS Study Group relies heavily on the ability and motivation of the study group facilitator(s), good organizational skills, time allocated to facilitating the program, a willingness to encourage and motivate individuals, and knowledge of exam requirements and procedures. Having someone who has taken the current exam available to answer questions related to the credentialing process may also be helpful. That person *should not*, however, provide or discuss specific content or questions from the exam. That would be highly unethical. It is more important that facilitators assist candidates in preparing for the exam, nurture good study habits, and remain a resource for candidates throughout the process.

It is recommended to use this study group guide in conjunction with the [Credentialing Candidate Guide](#) to ensure consistent and parallel coverage of information.

LENGTH OF STUDY GROUP SESSIONS

It is recommended that study groups meet from 6 to 8 weeks, or up to 3 months, depending on the needs of the group. Meetings should be either face-to-face or online for up to 3 hours once a week, with assigned activities. All parties in the study group should agree to the schedule set forth, including the material to be covered, and be committed to doing the work and participating in discussions. They should understand self-study augmented by group study is key to meeting their goals, and that no group can be delayed because one or more parties fail to accomplish assignments. Assignments should include due dates, and the schedule should be followed as closely as possible. Provide due dates at the first session. Facilitators should offer lots of support and encouragement throughout the process and be able to identify and help counsel candidates who may be struggling. *NOTE: These suggested guidelines may be customized based on experience, successful practices, needs of the group, and feedback.*

OAK HORIZONS COURSES

AHDI has partnered with Oak Horizons, Inc., to offer a number of specialty courses for self-assessment and continuing education. These specialty modules may be incorporated into your study group, or candidates may wish to take specific modules on their own. The specialty modules offered throughout the year include:

- Cardiology*
- Dermatology
- Endocrinology
- English Essentials for MTs
- Female Reproductive
- Gastroenterology*
- Geriatrics and Pediatrics
- GU and Male Reproductive
- Hematology and Lymphatic Systems
- Neurology
- Oncology and Pathology
- Ophthalmology, Audiology, and Special Senses
- Orthopedics*
- Psychiatry
- Radiology
- Respiratory*
- Surgery*
- Understanding and Caring for Personal Computers
- Web Use Resources and Productivity
- Word Building and Terminology

Read more information about or sign up for [Oak Horizons courses](#).

**included in Acute Care Module*

REGISTERED HEALTHCARE DOCUMENTATION SPECIALIST

RHDS STUDY GROUP OUTLINE

The first face-to-face or online study group session should be an orientation to the program and an assessment of the candidates' abilities.

In April 2011 AHDI published the [RMT Exam Guide: A Walk Through the Blue Print](#) (RHDS Ready) and the [RMT Exam Audio Objectives CD](#) (RHDS Ready) that could be used to provide structure for the study group or as pre-course and post-course assessment tools.

The RHDS exam consists of both multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank transcription against audio. The practical section uses dictation snippets, not full reports, and reference materials are not allowed. Both assessment types are used to test candidate knowledge and applied interpretive judgment in all knowledge domains represented on the RHDS Exam Blue Print, found in the [Credentialing Candidate Guide](#), including *Transcription Standards and Style, Clinical Medicine, and Health Information Technology*.

The transcription performance portion of the exam consists of short items employing medical dictation that must be transcribed, proofread, or edited. It consists of dictation that is realistic and representative of that encountered under actual working conditions. Dictation is selected for its appropriate medical content. The practical portion of the exam is designed to test a candidate's knowledge, skill, and ability to practice medical transcription effectively in today's healthcare environment. Emphasis in the practical portion of the exam is more on critical thinking skills rather than keyboarding, research, or other technical skills.

Clinical medicine questions will be limited to the following clinical specialties and should be reviewed during the course of study:

Alternative Medicine	Gastroenterology	Neurology	Physical/Rehab Med
Cardiovascular	Hepatology	OB/Gyn	Psychiatry/Psychology
Chiropractic	General Surgery	Orthopedics	Pulmonary Medicine
Dermatology	Hematology/Oncology	Otorhinolaryngology	Urology
Endocrinology	Infectious Disease	Pediatrics	Ophthalmology

Other suggestions for each study session include the following:

Transcription Standards and Style

- Cover 1-3 chapters per week
- Complete exercises for each chapter of selected text
- Review prefixes and suffixes
- Review punctuation, capitalization, grammar, plurals and possessives
- Select items weekly from the BOS for discussion
- Review common drugs and their uses
- Review medical record types, formats, and TATs
- Review abbreviations
- Review numbers, percents, proportions, ratios, ranges, and units of measure

Clinical Medicine

- Medical Terminology
- Anatomy and physiology
- Disease processes
- Diagnostics – *laboratory medicine, imaging, classification systems*
- Treatment – *pharmacology, surgery*

Health Information Technology

- Computers – hardware, software, basic terminology
 - Healthcare technology – abbreviations, definitions
 - Transcription technology – abbreviations, definitions
-

RHDS SUGGESTED COURSE OUTLINE

The following is a recommended study plan for candidates planning to study in a group setting. Independent study using other recommended resources and study materials is strongly recommended to assist candidates with exam preparation.

Week One

Orientation

- Hold general orientation.
- Provide syllabus.
- Complete Self-Assessment exercises and/or Oak Horizons Course.
- Review Credentialing Candidate Guide and RHDS Exam Blue Print.

Week Two

Anatomy and physiology

- Review structure and function of cells and tissues.
- Review structure and function of organs and systems.
- Review the spelling and meaning of prefixes, suffixes, combining forms, and root words.
- Review the spelling and terminology related to anatomy/physiology, clinical medicine, pharmacology, laboratory medicine, pathology, imaging studies, and other diagnostic studies (e.g., EKG, EEG, EMG, etc.).

Week Three

Medical Record Types, Formats, and TATs

- Review report types including operative reports, procedure notes, consultation reports, discharge summaries, history & physicals, imaging studies, pathology reports, clinic notes, letters, progress notes, the SOAP and HPIP formats.
- Review rules and standards for editing.

Week Four

Disease processes

- Review names of common diseases and conditions.
- Review signs and symptoms of common diseases and conditions.
- Review diagnostic procedures and treatment for common diseases and conditions.
- Review specialty reports.
- Review numbers, percents, proportions, ratios, and ranges.
- Review transcription issues related to units of measure, medical symbols, abbreviations, lab data, imaging data, plus drug indications and dosages.

Week Five

English language Part 1

- Review basic grammar rules.
- Review punctuation rules.
- Review English usage.

Week Six

English language Part 2

- Review the spelling and meaning of English words, including homonyms (recommend “Googling” for most frequently misspelled/misused English words).
- Review the spelling and meaning of documented medical abbreviations, acronyms, eponyms, homonyms (the BOS has a list), and synonyms.
- Review plural forms of medical terms (good review in appendix of *Sloane’s Medical Word Book* [Elsevier]).

Week Seven

Health Record Privacy and Security

- Review the healthcare record and medicolegal issues important to transcription.
- Review basic medical report types and the elements of each.
- Review regulatory requirements (HIPAA, Joint Commission, etc.).
- Review principles and processes for keeping audit trails.
- Review the purpose and content of the healthcare document.
- Identify risk management issues.

Week Eight

Final Review

- Cover transcription issues.
 - Address outstanding questions or concerns.
 - Conduct mock exam.¹
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RHDS RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR STUDY

- [Credentialing Candidate Guide](#) (read carefully)
- [Oak Horizons Courses](#)
- [RHDS Study Course](#)
- [RMT Exam Guide](#) (RHDS Ready) published by AHDI
- [RMT Exam Audio Objectives CD](#) (RHDS Ready)
- [The Book of Style for Medical Transcription, 3rd edition](#), published by AHDI
- [The Book of Style Workbook](#) published by AHDI
- [Practice Exams](#)
- [HIPAA Compliance Guide and Quick Reference](#)
- *The Language of Medicine* by Davi-Ellen Chabner
- The Joint Commission website (www.jointcommission.org)
- The Institute for Safe Medication Practices website (www.ismp.org)
- *Medical Transcription Workbook, 3rd edition*, by Health Professions Institute (This self-assessment tool is like the CHDS online prep assessment; facilitators could use it just before candidates take the exam as a final assessment.)
- *Technology for the Medical Transcriptionist* by Laura Bryan, CHDS, AHDI-F (Wolters Kluwer)
- [EHR Readiness Tool Kit: EHR & Technology Abbreviations & Acronyms](#)

Other recommended textbooks and references (always most recent editions) to aid studying include:

- *Understanding Pharmacology for the Health Professions* by Sue Turley (Brady Prentice Hall, www.prenhall.com)
- *Human Diseases* by John H. Dirckx, MD (Health Professions Institute, www.hpisum.com)
- *Laboratory Tests and Diagnostic Procedures in Medicine* by John H. Dirckx, MD (Health Professions Institute)
- *Medical Transcription Fundamentals: Where Success Takes Root, 2nd edition*, by Diane Gilmore
- *Stedman's Medical Terminology: Steps to Success in Medical Language* (Wolters Kluwer)
- *Stedman's Medical Terminology Flash Cards* (Wolters Kluwer)
- *Principles of Anatomy and Physiology* (Wiley Publishing)
- *The Anatomy Coloring Book* (Benjamin Cummings, Publisher)
- *The AMA Manual of Style, 10th Edition* (American Medical Association)
- English grammar/punctuation/style: *Gregg Reference Manual* (Sabin, William A. Irwin/McGraw-Hill; 10th edition).
- Medical dictionary (*Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*, 30th ed., or *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*, 27th ed. [not pocket or concise editions]).
- Abbreviation reference (Neil Davis's *Medical Abbreviations* is comprehensive and offers helpful appendices).
- English dictionary (*Merriam-Webster's English Dictionary* or *American Heritage Dictionary of English Language* (both are well regarded, and the latter has hundreds of notes on usage.)

In addition to the above resources, multiple excellent websites are available:

- A&P: getbodysmart.com (interactive animations to help you learn about the human body)
- getbodysmart.com
- Acronym Finder.com (find out what any acronym, abbreviation, or initialism stands for) Acronymfinder.com
- Drugs.com (includes a phonetic search assistant for MTs and MTEs) drugs.com
- GoogleMT.com googlemt.com

- Healthline (conditions, symptoms, treatments, medications) Healthline.com
- Internet drug index rxlist.com
- Labtestsonline.org (public resource on clinical lab testing) Labtestsonline.org
- Medilexicon Medilexicon (abbreviations, dictionary, drug search, instruments)
- Medline (medications, anatomy and surgery videos) Medline.com
- Medicinenet.com (research as well as slideshows, quizzes and general medical knowledge) Medicinenet.com
- One Look Dictionary Search onelook.com

Add to this list by asking members of the study group to share their favorite resources and websites. Share your list with AHDI by sending to ProfessionalPractices@ahdionline.org. *Please note in the email that you are sharing resources for potential inclusion in this Study Group Guide.*

CERTIFIED HEALTHCARE DOCUMENTATION SPECIALIST

CHDS STUDY GROUP OUTLINE

The first face-to-face or online study group session should be an orientation to the program and an assessment of the candidates' abilities.

The [CMT Exam Guide: A Walk Through the Blue Print](#) (CHDS Ready) and the [CMT Exam Audio Objectives CD](#) (CHDS Ready) were published in June 2011. These can be used to provide structure for the study group or as pre-course and post-course assessment tools.

The CHDS exam consists of multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank transcription against audio, and SRT editing against audio. These assessment types are used to test candidate knowledge and applied interpretive judgment in all knowledge domains represented on the CHDS Exam Blue Print, including *Clinical Medicine* and *Health Information Technology*.

The transcription performance portion of the exam consists of short items employing medical dictation that must be transcribed, proofread, or edited. It consists of dictation that is realistic and representative of that encountered under actual working conditions. Dictation is selected for its appropriate medical content. The practical portion of the exam is designed to test a candidate's knowledge, skill, and ability to practice medical transcription effectively in today's healthcare environment. Emphasis in the practical portion of the exam is more on critical thinking skills rather than keyboarding, research, or other technical skills.

Clinical medicine questions will be limited to the following clinical specialties, where the majority of content will come from the major specialties and a smaller percentage from the ancillary specialties. These should be reviewed during the course of study:

Major Specialties

Cardiovascular	Genetics	OB/Gyn	Pediatrics
Dermatology	General Surgery	Ophthalmology	Plastic Surgery
Endocrinology	Hematology/Oncology	Orthopedics	Psychology/Psychiatry
Gastroenterology	Infectious Disease	Otorhinolaryngology	Pulmonary Medicine
Hepatology	Neurology	Pain Management	Rheumatology
			Urology

Minor Specialties

Allergy/Immunology	Dentistry/Oral Surgery	Nutrition/Dietetics
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The CHDS exam is designed to assess the knowledge, skill, and interpretive ability of industry Level 2 MTs/HDSs in an acute care setting.

The knowledge and skill of CHDS candidates will be assessed through three question types:

- **Multiple-choice.** The majority of objectives involve assessment via a multiple-choice question type whereby the candidate will be asked to select an appropriate answer from a choice of 3-4 options, depending on the nature and scope of content.

- **Transcription with Audio.** Some objectives require assessment via practical application. Candidates will be given an audio clip with transcribed text containing “blank” fields that must be filled in by the candidate. Excerpts may contain one or more blanks, and all blanks must be filled in correctly to receive credit for the question.
- **SRT Editing Against Audio.** For this section of the exam, candidates will be provided with a speech-recognized draft of text and the accompanying dictated audio. The candidate will need to identify the word or phrase captured in error by the SRT engine and transcribe the correct word or phrase in the field provided.

A CHDS test candidate must have already taken and passed the RHDS exam in order to sit for the CHDS exam, or he/she may opt to take the Credential Qualifying Exam (CQE). CHDS exam takers should review and be familiar with all materials outlined under the RHDS portion of this guide. While there will not be specific questions about RHDS level 1 items, all knowledge domains and practical application standards, styles, etc., *should be applied* when taking the CHDS exam. In other words, because CHDS candidates would have been tested on level 1 knowledge and concepts already, those styles and standards should be applied—in addition to level 2 knowledge of styles and standards—when answering questions. Things such as applying the correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization of drugs, medical and English terminology; and applying the correct formatting of classifications (arabic and roman numerals as well as uppercase and lowercase letters) DO COUNT!

Other suggestions for each study session include the following:

Clinical Medicine

- Medical Terminology
- Anatomy and physiology
- Disease processes
- Diagnostics – *laboratory medicine, imaging, classification systems*
- Treatment – *pharmacology, surgery, special procedures*
- Equipment and instruments

Health Information Technology

- Healthcare technology – abbreviations, definitions
- Electronic Health Record – abbreviations, definitions
- Speech recognition technology – abbreviations, definitions, and editing
- Standards, nomenclatures, and measurement systems – abbreviations, definitions

CHDS SUGGESTED COURSE OUTLINE

The following is a recommended study plan for candidates planning to study in a group setting. Independent study using other recommended resources and study materials is strongly recommended to assist candidates with exam preparation.

Week One

Orientation

- Hold general orientation.
- Provide syllabus.
- Complete Self-Assessment exercises and/or Oak Horizons Course.
- Review Credentialing Candidate Guide and CHDS Exam Blue Print.

Week Two

Anatomy and physiology, Part 1

- Review structure and function of cells and tissues.
- Review structure and function of organs and systems.
- Review the spelling and terminology related to anatomy/physiology, clinical medicine, pharmacology, laboratory medicine, pathology, imaging studies, and other diagnostic studies (e.g., EKG, EEG, EMG, etc.).

Week Three

Anatomy and physiology, Part 2

- Review classification systems.
- Review names, spellings, and uses for equipment and instruments.

Week Four

Healthcare Information Technology

- Review abbreviations and definitions related to healthcare information technology.

Week Five

Speech Recognition Technology

- Review abbreviations, terminology, and definitions related to speech recognition.
- Review the difference between front-end and back-end SRT.
- Review factors that impact adoption/implementation of SRT.
- Review the role of an SR editor and how to successfully transition from MT to editor.
- Know how to resolve style/standard conflicts.

Week Six

Standards, nomenclatures, and measurement systems

- Review Book of Style standards.
- Know terminology, abbreviations, definitions related to nomenclatures or measurement systems, such as SNOMED, Health Level 7 (HL7), and Natural Language Processing (NLP).

Week Seven

Final Review

- Address outstanding questions or concerns.
 - Conduct mock exam.¹
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¹ NOTE: *The CHDS Exam Guide by AHDl contains a multiple-choice practice test which aligns with the CHDS exam blue print and can be used for the final study group mock exam.*

CHDS RECOMMENDED RESOURCES FOR STUDY

- [Credentialing Candidate Guide](#) (read carefully)
- [Oak Horizons Courses](#)
- [CHDS Study Course](#)
- [CMT Exam Guide \(CHDS Ready\) by AHDI](#)
- [CMT Exam Audio Objectives CD](#) (CHDS Ready)
- [The Book of Style for Medical Transcription, 3rd edition](#), published by AHDI
- [The Book of Style Workbook](#) published by AHDI
- [Practice Exams](#)
- [HIPAA Compliance Guide and Quick Reference](#)
- *The Language of Medicine* by Davi-Ellen Chabner
- The Joint Commission website (www.jointcommission.org)
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- English grammar/punctuation/style: *Gregg Reference Manual* (Sabin, William A. Irwin/McGraw-Hill; 10th edition).
- Medical dictionary (*Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary*, 30th ed., or *Stedman's Medical Dictionary*, 27th ed. [not pocket or concise editions]).
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In addition to the above resources, multiple excellent websites are available:

- A&P: getbodysmart.com (interactive animations to help you learn about the human body)
- getbodysmart.com
- Acronym Finder.com (find out what any acronym, abbreviation, or initialism stands for) Acronymfinder.com
- Drugs.com (includes a phonetic search assistant for MTs and MTEs) drugs.com
- GoogleMT.com googlemt.com

- Healthline (conditions, symptoms, treatments, medications) Healthline.com
- Internet drug index rxlist.com
- Labtestsonline.org (public resource on clinical lab testing) Labtestsonline.org
- Medilexicon Medilexicon (abbreviations, dictionary, drug search, instruments)
- Medline (medications, anatomy and surgery videos) Medline.com
- Medicinenet.com (research as well as slideshows, quizzes and general medical knowledge) Medicinenet.com
- One Look Dictionary Search onelook.com

Add to this list by asking members of the study group to share their favorite resources and websites. Share your list with AHDI by sending to ProfessionalPractices@ahdionline.org. *Please note in the email that you are sharing resources for potential inclusion in this Study Group Guide.*

CHDS AND RHDS TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

1. Review the Credentialing Candidate Guide thoroughly.

The guide covers everything you need to know about the exam and includes the exam blue print of every area covered on the exam, a comprehensive list of study aides, as well as sample questions.

2. Read each exam question carefully.

If the question is a multiple-choice question, make sure to read the entire question or stem and make sure you know what you are being asked to identify, define, or evaluate. Read all four answer choices carefully, and eliminate those that do not meet the parameters of the question you've been asked. Select the very best answer to the question, and don't over-analyze the question.

3. Take your time— don't rush it.

You can mark questions to review again at the end of each section before you submit the exam, time allowing.

4. Practice without your ergonomic keyboard or foot pedal.

You won't be allowed to bring ANYTHING into the testing room with you *except a headset* (which is required to bring) when testing at an onsite facility. If you have selected to take the OLP (online proctored) exam, you will be allowed to use your personal equipment (computer, keyboard, mouse, etc.). However, you will not be allowed to use a foot pedal. Practice using your mouse to start/stop/rewind/fast forward audio. Do not use keyboard shortcuts typically used in your work setting; compatibility between your work platform and the Websentinel platform is not universal. AHDI has an array of products that include practice CDs to help simulate the testing experience. Visit our [Online Store](#).

5. Practice without spellchecker, expansion software, or reference materials.

Reference materials are not allowed to be used during the exam. The respective exams test common, core knowledge information related to each specialty being tested (as outlined in the Credentialing Candidate Guide). Obscure, rare, or uncommon diseases, drugs, equipment names, names of mobility tests and maneuvers, or diagnostic studies/labs will not be included. Numerous spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors are made on exams because candidates have become dependent on spellcheckers and word expansion programs. AHDI has an array of products that include practice tapes and CDs to help you prepare. Visit our [Online Store](#).

6. Understand the rules for transcribing the audio items.

Keep in mind that the exam will be evaluating two critical skills in this section: (1) your ability to accurately interpret the word or phrase being dictated, and (2) your ability to express that word or phrase according to industry standards for grammar and style. Some items are specifically written to assess your ability to recognize a dictated error and edit appropriately, but do not make unnecessary edits (those that relate to preference of expression); make only those that an HDS would be required to edit for clarity.

- Do not add inappropriate punctuation between words and sentences to your transcribed answers; all punctuation (commas, semicolons, and periods) has been provided for you. Inclusion of punctuation already provided will result in a mismatch against the answer key, and the item will be marked wrong.

- *Do not* include a space, tab, indent, or other visible or hidden character at the beginning or end of your response, as this will result in a mismatch against the answer key, and the item will be marked wrong.
- *Do not* include words or phrases already provided in the text. Transcribe only the missing information.
- *Do* include hyphens (-), percent signs (%), virgules (/), and other appropriate symbols as necessary.
- *Do* capitalize words if it represents the first word of a sentence or is a word that would require capitalization within the sentence (brand name drug, proper noun, etc.).

7. Follow the instructions for the SRT editing portion (of the CHDS exam).

- Your response should contain only the word or phrase replacing the wrong word or phrase in the transcribed text. *Do not* add words before or after your response that represent correct words already indicated within the text supplied.

Example: In the sentence “*The patient had blue stools.*” the candidate should recognize that the word captured in error is *blue* and should be replaced by the word *loose*. In the answer field, type only the word *loose*, not *loose stools* or *had loose stools* or any other combination. Do not re-transcribe the entire excerpt. Do not include a period (it is already provided).

- Do not add inappropriate punctuation to your transcribed responses. For example, do not add blanks (in any form or fashion) if you do not know a word or phrase. *See Dos and Don’ts under #6 above regarding punctuation and symbols allowed and not allowed.*
- Do not include a space, tab, indent, or other visible or hidden character at the beginning or end of your answer, as this will result in a mismatch against the answer key, and the item will be marked wrong.

Contact AHDI’s Credentialing Department with further questions:

AHDI
 4230 Kiernan Avenue, Suite 120
 Modesto, CA 95356
 Phone: Toll Free (800) 982-2182 or Direct (209) 527-9620
 Fax: 209-527-9633
 Web: <http://www.ahdionline.org>
 Email: ahdi@ahdionline.org or credentialing@ahdionline.org