



# Dictation Goes Digital

## Online platform makes cassette tapes obsolete

By Victoria Chavez

**M**idwest Orthopaedics at Rush (MOR) has a long history of working with various medical transcription (MT) services, including five independent MTs or MT services. Physicians have developed very close working relationships with their MTs. These MTs allow for great productivity and efficiency because of their familiarity with the physician's dictation style and use of medical and technical jargon.

MOR needed a system that would help improve the workflow of its support staff and turnaround time from its MT services, but converting all of the physicians to one new service where a number of different MTs are used was not an option. MOR decided to let all of its physicians keep their current MTs but to transition to one centralized

technology platform to maximize efficiency while still preserving the quality of service.

MOR found what it was looking for in Scribe Healthcare Technologies, Inc., Lake Forest, Illinois, a company that came highly recommended. Scribe offered a centralized system for all areas of transcription that would consolidate processes, limit paperwork, and eventually save time and money. In effect, MOR went from cassette tapes and daily courier services in December 2003 to using digital recording devices for digital transmission of data in January 2004.

The flexibility of the Scribe system played a very important role in transitioning the physicians to a new system quickly, because the physicians were able to keep the

quality of their transcription service while improving all other aspects of processing dictations. If this were not the case, MOR might not be where it is today in terms of transcription. The company values the relationships it has with its transcription services and the quality of service they provide.

### Executing Change

The implementation consisted of three steps to transition to 100% digital via the Scribe system. First, the MTs were trained on Scribe and brought up to speed with hands-on training. This undertaking was challenging for them because moving to the new Scribe platform changed so many of their processes.

The computer systems of the MTs were updated so that they could support the Scribe online MT platform. Many, if not all, of their computers were outdated, with some systems as old as DOS. Scribe provided training sessions with each of the MT services and assisted with setting up their new computers. Once each MT service was comfortable on the system, they proceeded to implementation.

Second, the support staff, management team, and physicians were trained on Scribe's online MD platform, reworking their processes to handle dictation efficiently on the new platform. Again, Scribe was there every step of the way, training MOR's practice groups. This step also involved purchasing digital voice recorders for all clinicians and physicians, installing software on all computers for downloading audio files from the digital recorders, and training the staff how to download.

With technology comes the need for support. Scribe was very familiar with typical troubleshooting issues and helped MOR's IT staff through the transition.

The last step was training the physicians and clinicians to use the digital voice recorders. Although using them was not extremely different from using old devices that stored information on tapes, the look and feel of the new devices was slightly different and information was stored digitally. The MTs, physicians, and support staff were now working on one system divided into two platforms, one for the MTs and one for the physicians.

Later, Scribe introduced the administrative platform. This platform allowed for MOR to support staff internally, and only on rare occasions do they need to reach out to Scribe for technical support. Now that the technical kinks have been worked out from the implementation process and the administrative platform has been introduced, MOR only needs one IT staff member to support its Scribe system.

### Improved Efficiencies

For many reasons, the decision to use Scribe's services has surpassed all expectations. MOR no longer has to store or purchase tapes or rely on a courier service to deliver dictations to the proper sources. Now, MOR has a constant flow of files going out and completed files coming in. By eliminating the middleman, MOR avoids costly intercepts that can result in the complete loss of audio files. With its

new system, MOR rarely loses a file, in which case it is usually attributed to user error. In addition, the audio files are stored on the computer and are tracked on the Scribe system, substantially increasing the chances of finding missing information.

MOR staff has quickly become accustomed to transferring audio files to its MT services in a matter of minutes. The audio files can be transmitted electronically from the physician to the MT service almost instantaneously. With courier service and tapes, the standard turnaround time was two weeks; now it is anywhere from four to 48 hours.

With a practice that is constantly growing, space is a priority. Now that its files are stored electronically, it is not necessary for MOR to physically store everything in charts in its medical records department. Scribe's platform is completely Web-based, so critical patient information is available at all times.

### Planning Ahead

Since the transition, Scribe has been flexible in accommodating MOR's needs as a company. For instance, MOR is taking large strides toward an electronic medical records system.

## MOR Thanks Its MTs

Without our talented MTs, the transition to Scribe's platform would have been a daunting challenge. We thank you for all you do and for your dedicated service to our company.

- Anne Luginbill, independently contracted for 19 years
- CT Transcription, 18 years
- Accuscript, 9 years
- Keystrokes Transcription Service, Inc., 3 years
- Joyce Garst, independently contracted for over a year

MOR recently launched a Health Level Seven, Inc. (HL7) interface that exports patient identification information from its system application into the Scribe platform and imports patient clinical notes from Scribe into MOR's system. The interface attaches all notes back into the patient's chart in MOR's system.

Scribe has always taken into consideration any suggestions or needs of MOR to ensure the system is working at its full potential. So far, MOR has reduced costs and enhanced work processes on all fronts, and the company can report with simplicity for billing purposes and quality assurance. This transition was a huge step in the right direction and has opened the door to endless possibilities. MOR feels that it is vital to move forward relentlessly in its pursuit of the latest technology. The 100% digital transcription system is a testament to that, and MOR's staff looks forward to the changes ahead. 🗣️

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A digital voice recorder stores information on an online platform rather than on tapes.