

## Program Endorsement Brief: 1208.20/Administrative Medical Assisting Medical Scribes

Los Angeles/Orange County Center of Excellence, March 2019

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### Introduction

The Orange County Center of Excellence for Labor Market Research (COE) prepared this report to provide regional labor market supply and demand data related to **medical scribes**. This report is intended to help determine whether there is demand in the local labor market that is not being met by the supply from community college programs that align with relevant occupations.

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the United States Congress passed the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act in 2009. This Act created financial incentives for medical providers to adopt effective Electronic Health Record (EHR) systems. The law also set up penalties for providers that had not adopted EHR systems by 2016.<sup>1</sup> Entering information into a patient's EHR requires additional attention that can disrupt a doctor's workflow and interactions with a patient. Recognizing this problem, doctors have hired medical scribes to enter information into a patient's EHR, allowing the doctor to focus on patient care rather than spending time at a computer.<sup>2</sup> According to the American College of Medical Scribe Specialists (ACMSS), a medical scribe certification organization, there will be 100,000 medical scribes working in the US by 2020. While there is not any mandatory license or certification required at this time to become a medical scribe, scribes often need to have knowledge of medical terminology and insurance requirements in addition to typing and writing skills.<sup>3</sup>

Currently, there is no Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code for medical scribes listed in the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) coding system. However, there are two occupations (medical assistant and medical secretary) that are closely related to medical scribes. The medical assistant and medical secretary occupations will be analyzed in this report using traditional labor market information and real-time job postings data.

### Summary

The following summarizes key findings from this data brief:

- The number of jobs related to medical scribes is projected to **increase by 10% through 2022**. Over **8,000 job openings** will be available annually due to new job growth and replacement need.
- In the past 12 months, there were **13,057 online job postings** for occupations related to medical scribes in Los Angeles and Orange Counties.
- **258 job postings** included "Medical Scribe" in the job title.

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<sup>1</sup> "Meaningful Use' of Electronic Health Records," Health Affairs, last modified August 24, 2010, accessed March 18, 2019, <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hpb20100824.587990/full/>.

<sup>2</sup> Melissa Bailey, "The pay is low, the typing nonstop, but the medical scribe business is booming," *Stat*, April 25, 2016, <https://www.statnews.com/2016/04/25/scribes-emergency-room/>.

<sup>3</sup> Lisa Esposito, "Medical Scribes Ease Pressure on Doctors and May Improve Patient Care," *U.S. News*, October 31, 2018, <https://health.usnews.com/health-care/patient-advice/articles/2018-10-31/medical-scribes-ease-pressure-on-doctors-and-may-improve-patient-care>.

- **Zero related program recommendation requests under the same TOP Code (1208.20)** were received between January and December 2018.
- Between 2014 and 2017, community colleges in the region conferred an average of **84 awards annually** (associate degrees and certificates) in related training programs under the same TOP Code.

### Occupational Demand

Exhibit 1 shows the five year occupational demand projections for occupations related to medical scribes. In Los Angeles/Orange County, the number of jobs related to medical scribes is projected to increase by 10% through 2022. There will be over 8,000 job openings per year through 2022. Because there is no SOC code for medical scribes listed in the BLS coding system, figures listed in Exhibit 1 are not exclusive to medical scribes and include other jobs such as clinical assistants, medical office assistants, and patient coordinators.

**Exhibit 1: Occupational demand in Los Angeles and Orange Counties<sup>4</sup>**

Geography	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017-2022 Change	2017-2022 % Change	Annual Openings
Los Angeles	43,821	48,088	4,267	10%	5,650
Orange	17,945	20,078	2,133	12%	2,406
<b>Total</b>	<b>61,766</b>	<b>68,166</b>	<b>6,400</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8,056</b>

**Wages**—Average entry-level and median hourly wages for occupations related to medical scribes are \$12.09 and \$17.01, respectively. Entry-level wages for these occupations are lower than the MIT Living hourly wage estimate for one adult in the region (\$13.54 in Los Angeles County and \$15.31 in Orange County). On average, experienced workers earn \$25.26, which is higher than the living wage estimate. Regional average wages are lower than the average statewide wage of \$18.58 for these occupations. Wage information, by county, is included in Appendix A.

**Job Postings**—There were 13,057 online job postings for occupations related to medical scribes listed in the past 12 months. Of these postings, 2% (258) included “medical scribe” in the job title. The majority of medical scribe job postings were for medical scribe, medical assistant, and office assistant. The top specialized skills for medical scribes were: electronic medical records, medical terminology, and anatomy. The top three employers for medical scribes, by number of job postings, in the region, were: Scribeconnect, CEP America, and California Pract.

**Educational Attainment**—The BLS lists high school diploma or equivalent or postsecondary nondegree award as the typical entry-level education required for medical scribe-related occupations. The national-level educational attainment data indicates that between 46.9% and 65.7% of workers in the field have completed some college or an associate degree. Of the 38% of medical scribe job postings listing a minimum education requirement in Los Angeles/Orange County, 95% (92) request a high school diploma or vocational training.

<sup>4</sup> Five-year change represents new job additions to the workforce. Annual openings include new jobs and replacement jobs that result from retirements and separations.

**Community College Supply**—Exhibit 2 shows the three-year average number of awards conferred by community colleges in the related TOP code: Administrative Medical Assisting (1208.20). The colleges/programs with the most completions in the region are: Glendale and Saddleback. Between January and December 2018, there were zero other related program recommendation requests from regional community colleges.

**Exhibit 2: Regional community college awards (certificates and degrees), 2014-2017**

TOP Code	Program	College	2014-15 Awards	2015-16 Awards	2016-2017 Awards	3-Year Award Average
1208.20	Administrative Medical Assisting	East LA	1	0	3	1
		Glendale	20	29	16	22
		Long Beach	1	0	0	0
		Pasadena	2	2	1	2
		Saddleback	26	21	20	22
		Santa Monica	5	8	6	6
		Santiago Canyon	21	15	28	21
		West LA	5	17	4	9
<b>Total/Average</b>			<b>81</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>84</b>

**Appendix A: Occupational demand and wage data by county**

**Exhibit 3. Los Angeles County**

Occupation (SOC)	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings
Medical Assistants (31-9092)	23,871	26,204	2,333	10%	3,069	\$11.58	\$16.36	\$25.15
Medical Secretaries (43-6013)	19,950	21,884	1,934	10%	2,581	\$12.59	\$17.60	\$27.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,821</b>	<b>48,088</b>	<b>4,267</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>5,650</b>			

**Exhibit 4. Orange County**

Occupation (SOC)	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings
Medical Assistants (31-9092)	9,460	10,623	1,163	12%	1,274	\$12.22	\$16.72	\$24.39
Medical Secretaries (43-6013)	8,484	9,455	971	11%	1,133	\$12.10	\$17.76	\$24.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,945</b>	<b>20,078</b>	<b>2,133</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>2,406</b>			

### Exhibit 5. Los Angeles and Orange Counties

Occupation (SOC)	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	5-Yr Change	5-Yr % Change	Annual Openings	Entry-Level Hourly Earnings	Median Hourly Earnings	Experienced Hourly Earnings
Medical Assistants (31-9092)	33,332	36,826	3,494	10%	4,343	\$11.77	\$16.46	\$24.55
Medical Secretaries (43-6013)	28,434	31,339	2,905	10%	3,714	\$12.47	\$17.65	\$26.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>61,766</b>	<b>68,166</b>	<b>6,400</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8,056</b>			

#### Appendix B: Sources

- O\*NET Online
- Labor Insight/Jobs (Burning Glass)
- Economic Modeling Specialists, International (EMSI)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, OES
- Employment Development Department, Unemployment Insurance Dataset
- Living Insight Center for Community Economic Development
- California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Management Information Systems (MIS)
- MIT Living Wage
- Chancellor's Office Curriculum Inventory (COCI 2.0)

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