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Memorandum

To: Nicki Neal
Director

Thru: Keith Murry *Keith*
Class Studies Supervisor

From: Rob Weber *RW*
Class Studies Analyst

Date: March 11, 2013

Subject: Correspondence Secretary Job Class Study

Introduction:

This memorandum addresses the processes and results of the Correspondence Secretary job class study. This study was initiated by the Department of Health & Social Services (DHSS)/ Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)/ Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API). The initial API request was seeking to develop a multi-level series job class that would have combined medical records maintenance and medical data transcription duties. This request was not viable as it would have combined two separate and distinct functions. Alternatively, the study focused on the medical data transcription work. To address this request, Classification requested updated position descriptions of those positions assigned medical transcription work, conducted desk audits, and developed a single level job class, Medical Transcriptionist. This new job class is specific to medical transcriptionist work and developed for use by State agencies where medical transcription work is present.

Study Contacts:

- Sarah E.B. Woods (Deputy Director, Finance Management Services/ DHSS) – management support and agency contact.
- Tina Williams (Accountant IV, API/DHSS) – study contact.
- Donna Knowles (Medical Records Administrator, API/DHSS) – study contact.

Job Class History:

The Correspondence Secretary was created in October 1976 as a three level class series. This series was created to perform production typing services within a State agencies' word processing center.

The series was typically flexed from the lower to higher levels. Incumbents typically advanced to the next higher class upon satisfactory achievement of performance criteria required for the assigned word processing application. With the move from large production style typing pools to the personal computer and desktop word processing, the number of positions allocated to this series has diminished. There are currently two positions allocated to the highest level of this class: PCNs 065235 and 065173, both are located in the medical records unit of API/DHSS.

Class Analysis:

The state's classification plan provides for the grouping of positions into job classes when they are sufficiently similar with respect to duties and responsibilities, degree of supervision exercised and received, and entrance requirements so that: 1) the same title can be used to clearly identify each position; 2) the same minimum qualifications for initial appointment can be established for all positions; 3) the same rate of basic pay can be fairly applied to all positions; and 4) employees in a particular class are considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall. Job classes should be constructed as broadly as is feasible as long as the tests of similarity are met.

Introduction:

This analysis examines the transcription duties and responsibilities performed by positions assigned to the Alaska Psychiatric Institute. The positions assigned transcription responsibilities work in a medical records unit alongside Medical Records Assistants assigned the responsible for establishing, maintaining, and managing the storage and care of medical records. All positions report to the unit supervisor, Word Processing Center Supervisor.

Nature of the work:

The work this study examined is a specialized clerical function. This is made evident by the necessity for specialty training or experience in transcription equipment, practices, and protocols specific to the medical industry; the requisite knowledge of the breath of laws and rules that govern transcription practices; and the knowledge of language specific to the medical industry including the jargon and acronyms. The work also requires applying knowledge of the mental health diagnostic and disease classification manuals and the English language and grammar.

Incumbents begin the transcription process by downloading the dictated request from a database that is populated with the job orders recorded by doctors and other healthcare professionals. In the case of API, the dictations are typically psychiatric evaluations, patient historical and physical information, forensics and legal letters, and assignments requiring 24 hour turn around. These dictations require incumbents to utilize transcription hardware and software, typically foot controls to slow or pause a recording, and utilize transcription and speech recognition software. When completing assignments, incumbents apply federal and State laws and regulations regarding the security and privacy of healthcare data and the national standards for electronic healthcare transactions.

The work this study examined displays a requirement for specialized knowledge of medical language and jargon, State and national laws regarding the privacy of patient medical information, and knowledge and skill in transcription practices and equipment. There are currently two positions assigned this work. Based on the criteria for grouping positions into job class, these positions should be grouped into one class for administrative purposes as they share significant similarities with respect to duties and responsibilities and degree of supervision exercised and received. Additionally, the positions also share similarities when considering job entrance requirements so that the same

title can be used to clearly identify each position; the same minimum qualifications for initial appointment can be established; the same rate of basic pay can be fairly applied; and so that the employees in a particular class will be considered an appropriate group for purposes of layoff and recall.

Because of the specialized requirements of the work, it does not meet the defined requirements for grouping with the Correspondence Secretary series or other general clerical classes. A new class defined and distinguished by medical transcription duties is needed.

Class Title:

When selecting a class title it should be the best descriptive title for the work. A class title is intended to concisely and accurately convey the kind and level of work performed and should be brief, easily recognized, gender neutral, and understood by potential applicants. Medical Transcriptionist fits the above criteria; it is also the standard title within the medical industry and degree and certificate programs for medical transcription work and training.

Minimum Qualifications:

The minimum qualifications established for the Medical Transcriptionist job class relates to the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to transcribe the medical data dictated by physicians and other healthcare providers into required reporting formats for placement into the patient medical records and facility filing system. The minimum threshold is typically on-the-job experience transcribing medical data or a diploma or certificate of successful completion from an accredited medical transcription training program. These minimum qualifications have been designed so as not to create any artificial barriers to employment of individuals in protected classes.

Class Code:

A Class Code is assigned to a job class based on its placement in the classification schematic of Occupational Groups and Job Families. Occupational Groups are made up of related Job Families and encompass relatively broad occupations, professions, or activities. Job Families are groups of job classes and class series that are related as to the nature of the work performed and typically have similar initial preparation for employment and career progression.

The work this study examined is allocated to the Correspondence Secretary class series, in General Administration job family (PB01). PB01 includes classes of positions that perform administrative, technical, and clerical work of a general nature that enables agencies to perform their line functions. The primary purpose of the subject work is a specialized clerical function that requires knowledge specific to the medical field, laws and terminology, and the transcription of confidential patient medical information. The primary purpose of this work indicates the job class should be moved to an occupational group and job family with classes assigned work in the health care field.

After reviewing the class outline, this analyst determined the appropriate occupational group and job family placement for the Medical Transcriptionist job class is in occupational group PG Medical, Public Health, and Related – Health Administration job family (PG01). PG01 is appropriate for this job class because the nature of the work of this class is directly related to the administration, recording, and storage of health care information. Other supporting evidence for placing this job class in PG01 includes the clerical class that provides support in the administration and maintenance of health care records – Medical Records Assistant.

The Medical Transcriptionist job class is placed in PG01 – Health Administration.

Fair Labor Standards Act:

The positions in this study are covered by the minimum wage and maximum hour provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as Amended (FLSA). While exemption from the provisions of the Act are determined based on the specific circumstances of an individual employee on a work-week basis, there are general aspects of the classes and their influence on the exemptions for employees in bona fide executive, professional, or administrative positions that can be addressed in general.

The work of the Medical Transcriptionist job class is clerical in nature and typically requires on-the-job experience transcribing medical data or a diploma or certificate from an accredited medical transcription program in order to perform the work upon entry to the workforce. The work does not require the authorities or responsibilities of managing and supervising subordinate personnel; managing administrative or programmatic activities; or a required professional degree to perform the work. From the reasoning above, an incumbent assigned to the Medical Transcriptionist job class does not meet the criteria for exemption from the overtime requirements of the FLSA.

Internal Alignment – method and analysis:

Method

The salary range of a job class is determined based on internal consistency within the State's pay plans, in accordance with merit principles, with the goal of providing fair and reasonable compensation for services rendered and maintaining the principle of like pay for like work (AS 39.25.010(b)(2)). In evaluating internal consistency, the difficulty, responsibility, knowledge, skills, and other characteristics of a job are compared with job classes of a similar nature, kind, and level in the same occupational group and job family or related job families. Comparisons with classes in other job families may be made when similarities are sufficient to provide valid relationships, the comparisons within the occupational group are few, and/or when the study class displays characteristics that justify comparisons with another job family. The greater the similarity with the study class, the more weight should be given to the comparable class. Comparisons within the job family are typically given greater weight than comparisons to classes located in other job families.

As discussed in the Class Analysis section of this memo, the Medical Transcriptionist job class is assigned a specialized clerical function directly related to the administration of health care information. Within the State's Classification Outline, job classes assigned clerical or technical level assignments are collectively grouped as category A. In determining the classes for internal alignment, this analyst selected category A classes from the Health Administration job family (PG01). This method produced one comparable class. To ensure the characteristics of the class were given full consideration, the scope of this analysis was increased to include category A classes from the Specialty Health Services (PG06) and the Administrative and Office Support occupational group (PB): PB01.

The method for this salary analysis is outlined below using tables to illustrate the comparable job classes and the characteristics that are common among each range in relation to the eight classification factors. The comparable classes for this analysis were selected based on their similarity to the study class.

Table 1 describes the job classes selected for alignment comparison and range characteristics.

Range	Job Class (Family Code)	Description	Range Characteristics
8	Office Assistant I (PB0102)	Incumbents perform clerical-level tasks such as drafting and editing correspondence, performing data entry, and providing general reception duties and typing, filing, sorting mail, and copying documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journey-level clerical work • Incumbents follow general instructions or established office procedures to perform work that requires general knowledge of the program/operations • Contacts are typically State employees and the public; incumbents gather and provide information • Completes basic typing projects • Knowledge of the proper use of English grammar and spelling • Qualifications include a high school diploma or clerical experience
10	Office Assistant II (PB0103)	Incumbents perform clerical services that require determining the administrative and/or programmatic tasks to be completed, prioritizing work, and deciding the appropriate action to be taken based on their interpretation and application of the organization's programs, policies, and regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced-level clerical work • Incumbents operate independently with minimal supervision, using federal, State, and/or the organization's standards as guidelines • Contacts are typically State employees and the public; incumbents gather and provide information
	Medical Records Assistant (PG0140)	Medical Records Assistant is a clerical class that requires specialized education or experience related to the care and maintenance of medical records. Incumbents apply federal and State standards as guidelines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May type correspondence, memorandums, and other assignments • Qualifications include a high school diploma and clerical or medical records maintenance experience and specialized education in medical technology

<p>11</p>	<p>Office Assistant III (PB0104)</p>	<p>Incumbents provide the sole support to an organization's operations and perform clerical work in multiple administrative functional areas such as accounting and financial management, procurement/purchasing, or personnel management OR lead a defined clerical support unit where they may train, assign, and check the work of lower level-clerical staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerical-level work in multiple administrative functional areas • Incumbents operate independently with minimal supervision using the organization's standards as guidelines • Lead or supervisory duties may be assigned • Knowledge of correspondence and typing formats • Knowledge of English grammar, and spelling, composition • Contacts are typically State employees and the public; incumbents gather and provide information • Qualifications include a high school diploma and clerical experience
<p>Secretary (PB0130)</p>	<p>Incumbents are assistants to executives who are responsible for broad program policy determination and implementation, such as a deputy, or assistant commissioner, division director, or executive director of a board or commission.</p>		
<p>12</p>	<p>Office Assistant IV (PB0105)</p>	<p>Incumbents supervise a clerical support unit and have substantial responsibility for the units' performance; planning, assigning, organizing, and reviewing subordinates' work; and exercising independent judgment in employing, disciplining, or adjudicating grievances of subordinates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisory-level clerical work • Technical work in multiple administrative functional areas or specialty area • Incumbents operate under varying degrees of supervision while using a variety of guidelines such as organizational policies and procedures, collective bargaining agreements, State and federal laws and regulations • Supervisory and/or lead duties are present/ required • Contacts may be State employees, contractors, supply vendors and the public; incumbents gather and provide information • Qualifications include a high school diploma, clerical experience, or experience in the medical field and State licensure as a pharmacy technician
<p>Administrative Assistant I (PB0151)</p>	<p>Incumbents either perform routine, well defined tasks to support higher-level managers OR work in a training capacity to learn and develop the knowledge and skills necessary to perform journey level work. Technical duties may include work accounting, procurement, or personnel management.</p>		
<p>Pharmacy Technician (PG0630)</p>	<p>Under the supervision of a registered pharmacist, incumbents select, package and, label prescribed medications. Incumbents also maintain pharmaceutical databases and the security of pharmaceutical supplies.</p>		

Analysis:

Medical Transcriptionists transcribe medical reports dictated by physicians and other healthcare providers into the formats required for placement into a patient's medical record and a facility's filing system. Incumbents working in this class apply knowledge of medical terminology, pharmacology, anatomy and physiology, transcription technology, health industry requirements, and institutional policies and procedures in order to accurately transcribe the medical evaluations, observations, and conclusions made by healthcare providers into medical records. This specialized clerical work is performed with minimal supervision using federal, State, and organizational standards as guidelines, including patient privacy laws, psychological diagnostic manuals, and international disease classification manuals.

Comparing the Medical Transcriptionist with nature and type of duties that characterize range 8 revealed the Medical Transcriptionists duties have a higher level of difficulty, required knowledge, and independent judgment. These differences support assigning the Medical Transcriptionist above range 8.

Comparing the Medical Transcriptionist with nature and type of duties that characterize range 12 revealed the range 12 classes have a higher level of difficulty, greater variety, greater organizational responsibility and authority, and a higher number of general guidelines that permit greater discretion in determining the appropriate course of action given various circumstances. These differences support assigning the Medical Transcriptionist below range 12.

Comparing the Medical Transcriptionist with nature and type of duties that characterize ranges 10 and 11 revealed the Medical Transcriptionist has levels of difficulty, required knowledge, and independence that are similar to range 10 and a nature of contacts and levels of required specialized skill and judgment that are similar to range 11. Evaluating the nature of medical transcription work indicates greater weight is appropriately given the particular skills and judgment required to be proficient. Examination of the whole job indicates the new job class is most appropriately aligned with the classes at range 11.

Conclusions:

A new job class has been created to cover medical transcription work. The title for this class is Medical Transcriptionist. The class code is PG0143; the AKPAY code is K0121; and the salary range is 11.

The class is established effective March 1, 2013.

PCNs: 065173 and 065235 are allocated to the Medical Transcriptionist job class effective March 16, 2013.

Additional correspondence regarding the allocation of the study positions is being distributed through the OPD system.

The Correspondence Secretary I – III class series is abolished effective April 1, 2013.

Nicki Neal, Director

March 11, 2013

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Attachment:

Final class specification

cc:

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