THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MEDICAL SECRETARIAL CURRICULUM AT NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MEDICAL SECRETARIAL CURRICULUM AT NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

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J.A.T.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

This study was concerned with the development of a Medical Secretarial Curriculum at Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City, Michigan.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Traverse City, Michigan

Traverse City, Michigan, is a small city in northwestern Michigan in the lower peninsula. It is situated between two arms of Lake Michigan which are called East and West Grand Traverse Bays. A Chamber of Commerce Survey[1] placed the population at 18,500 in 1957. According to the 1950 official census the population was 16,974.

Until the turn of the century, Traverse City was a lumbering center in northern Michigan. Its people found employment in the lumbering camps and sawmills in the area. When the timber ran out and the sawmills were closed, the inhabitants of Traverse City sought other means of earning a livelihood. The sandy, loamy soil of Old Mission Peninsula was found to be especially suited to the raising of cherries. General farming and the raising of fruit provided employment for thousands of

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[1]Traverse City Chamber of Commerce Survey Census, 1957-58, a bulletin of the Chamber of Commerce, Traverse City, Michigan, (Mimeographed).

people. Thousands more were employed when the first fruit processing plant was opened in 1912.

The townspeople now find their chief employment in resort trade, agriculture (primarily the raising of cherries and apples), fruit processing, manufacturing, retail and wholesale distribution, and medicine with its related practices.

Traverse City is rapidly becoming known as a medical center in northern Michigan and benefits from the practice of seven general practioners and thirty specialists. These physicians employ fifteen registered nurses, four practical nurses and nineteen medical secretaries.[2] The State Mental Hospital (3,000 beds), the Osteopathic Hospital (34 beds), and James Decker Munson Hospital (182 beds), all located in the city, together employ an additional fifteen medical secretaries, stenographers, and typists.[3]

Traverse City, Michigan is a small city that has experienced good times as well as bad. The people of Traverse City, however, display unusual creativity in utilizing natural and human resources for the benefit of their community. Cooperation is a keyword, and it was this spirit of cooperation and continued interest that made the founding of a community college possible and that gave impetus to this study.

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[2]Marcus Sheffer, "Survey of Practicing Physicians and Employees in Related Practices in Traverse City, Michigan" (unpublished manuscript, July, 1956).

[3]*Ibid*.

> The people of this area have known periods of prosperity and suffering, of uncertainty, and of hope, and have shown themselves capable of creating work and opportunities for themselves. This was particularly true in the transition period when the lumbering industry declined and a new economy had to be found. They succeeded in establishing a strong and prosperous fruit and resort industry which promises to equal or surpass the prosperity in evidence during the heights of the lumber industry.
>
> It is these same people or their descendants who have worked and struggled together to found Northwestern Michigan College. Their initiative and determination are emphasized because they are, without doubt, one of the few peoples who from "grass roots" beginnings have dreamed, planned, and established a community college. It is a story unique in the history of Michigan education.[4]

Northwestern Michigan College

Northwestern Michigan College opened its doors to sixty-five students in 1951. By 1956 the enrollment had increased to two hundred fifty students. Approximately 66 per cent of these students live in Grand Traverse County and 22 per cent are from the surrounding four counties (Leelanau, Antrim, Kalkaska, and Benzie) which aided initially in raising funds for the establishment of the College. The College strives to fulfill its responsibility to these communities by providing liberal education and by expanding its curriculum in areas where there is evidence of a need of justifiable post high school training.

> The purpose of Northwestern Michigan College is to bring liberal and vocational studies on the college level to people of all ages in northwestern Michigan. Regionally controlled

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[4]William J. Valade, "A Study of the Origin, Development, and Trends of Selected Community Colleges of Michigan" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan, 1956), p. 99.

> and supported, this institution is shaping its future around the needs of the area it serves. The College proposes to serve (1) students who wish to begin a liberal arts or pre-professional program, (2) students who wish to complete a two-year course combining general and vocational studies, (3) part-time students who wish to develop particular skills or cultural interests with or without acquiring college credit in the process.
>
> The purpose of the College is also to serve as an educational and cultural center. It carries out these aims by providing leadership, technical aid, and facilities for groups engaged in community service, research, or cultural development by encouraging other Michigan schools to operate college extension courses on its campus; and finally, by standing ready to offer its own courses and services at off-campus points throughout the region when such needs arise.[5]

Many students who attend Northwestern Michigan College do so because limited finances prevent their attendance at other institutions of higher learning, and others prefer to attend school in their home community and eventually find employment there. Approximately two-thirds of the students come from families whose incomes are under $5,000, and it is logical to assume that a number of students would not engage in post high school training if they were forced to bear the additional expense of living away from home.

The Need for Medical Secretarial Training

From the time the college opened in 1951, a number of students in the secretarial curriculum at Northwestern Michigan College indicated to their instructors their desire for additional secretarial training in the specialized field of medicine. One of the major factors influencing

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[5] Northwestern Michigan College Catalogue, 1956-57, p. 8.

their preference for the specialized training was their desire to be associated with the service of medicine. Examination of college catalogues indicated that few schools in Michigan listed the type of training the students wanted, and that the nearest school was one hundred miles from Traverse City. An effort was made to provide training for the students by adding medical shorthand books to the College library and by medical dictation given by the regular shorthand teacher. An adult education class in shorthand was offered in which medical dictation was given, and interested students were encouraged to use medical shorthand textbooks.

Physicians in the community had, from time to time, voiced an increasing need for trained medical secretaries in their offices to relieve the registered nurses of their clerical work and routine-assisting duties and to replace the fluctuating supply of in-service trained medical secretaries who frequently left their jobs (ordinarily for such reasons as marriage and pregnancy) at the very time that they had become valuable to the practice.

It seemed apparent that training for medical secretaries at the college level was desirable, and in March, 1956, Dr. Frank Power, a member of the Grand Traverse, Benzie and Leelanau Counties Medical Society who was also serving as mayor of Traverse City at that time, was consulted by the investigator. Dr. Power was asked for suggestions relative to specialized training that the business instructors at the College might give students who were interested in becoming medical secretaries. He

showed keen interest and, after a considerable amount of reflection, posed the question of offering a medical secretarial training program at the College. This would be dependent, of course, upon the endorsement of the administration and the cooperation of the physicians in the area. Telephone calls made by Dr. Power to other physicians in the city to note their immediate reaction to such a plan resulted in votes of confidence.

After discussion with representatives of the medical profession, the Director of the College was asked for his opinion concerning a curriculum which would provide for the training of medical secretaries. The Director, who was aware of the interest of students in such a program, agreed to work with Dr. Power and the investigator in a preliminary analysis of the problem.

The procedures that were followed in the preliminary investigation, development of the curriculum, and carrying out classroom activities are discussed in Chapters II and III. Administrative and instructional difficulties which were encountered, and recommendations for other institutions interested in establishing medical secretarial training programs are discussed in Chapter VI.

DELIMITATION OF PROBLEM

The problems involved in establishing a Medical Secretarial Training Curriculum at Northwestern Michigan College at Traverse City, Michigan, were peculiar to the size of the school, its staff, facilities, and existing curriculum, as well as to the facilities afforded by interested local medical personnel. The enrollment in the course was expected to

be small. Only essential specialized courses could be added to the already full schedules of the two College business teachers who participated in the program. Local physicians indicated their willingness to cooperate in the planning and instruction of the program, thus eliminating the need to involve College biology personnel or to purchase costly equipment until the time that the enrollment in the program would justify the expenditure.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

A Community College serves its people by providing education and by expanding its curriculum in areas where there is a justifiable need. The basic objective of Northwestern Michigan College is to bring liberal and vocational studies on the college level to people of all ages in northern Michigan.[6] This particular institution is shaping its future around the needs of the area it serves. More and more effort is being made to extend the college field of service to adults of the area who want training to enable them to effect adjustments to conditions of modern life.[7]

With medical care being made available to more and more people, the demand for medical secretaries is increasing and is evidenced throughout

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[6]Northwestern Michigan College Catalogue, 1956-57, p. 8.

[7]Preston Tanis, "Northwestern Michigan College" (Traverse City: History, Program, and Enrollment Trends and Expectancy of Northwestern Michigan College, 1956), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

the country.[8] Physicians have increasingly realized in recent years the importance of good public relations and efficient business methods in connection with their medical practices.[9] The belief is held by many physicians that a physician can reduce his work load per patient by delegating certain activities in his office to properly trained personnel.[10] A recent study made by Dr. Harold Mickelson of Northeast Missouri State Teachers College, Kirksville, Missouri, with the cooperation of the American Medical Association, exemplified the interest of the A. M. A. in providing a basis for the development and improvement of the educational programs in schools for the training at a high level of secretaries for physicians' offices.[11]

All schools, particularly community colleges, should be interested in serving the needs of their communities and students. Business educators and medical personnel are concerned with developing programs for training medical secretaries. Such programs as those identified below are indicative of this concern. Dodge Vocational High School in New York is pioneering in a work-study program for medical assistants on the high school level. The reactions on the part of physicians, hospitals,

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[8]Laurel D. Cook, "The Medical Secretary," Northwestern University Summer Catalogue (Chicago: 1955), p. 2.

[9]Harold Mickelson. "The Medical Secretary." Preface by Leo E. Brown. A brochure published by the American Medical Association from a Doctor's dissertation, Northeastern Missouri State Teachers College, Kirksville, Missouri, 1957.

[10]*Ibid*.

[11]*Ibid*.

and other employers have been highly favorable.[12] Highland Park Junior College offers a one-year medical program "which provides an excellent opportunity for adults as well as students who can't afford the time or money for a four-year training program. This program which was launched in 1951 is rapidly gaining prestige on both the national and international level."[13] Green Mountain Junior College, Poultney, Vermont, is now in its twelfth year of training medical secretaries. Doctors were consulted by Dr. Evangeline Markwick in the development of the curriculum for medical secretaries at Green Mountain Junior College.[14]

Medical Secretarial Training had a "grass roots beginning" in Traverse City. The program evolved from the need of physicians in the community for trained medical secretaries and the desire of students to become medical secretaries. Very little information concerning the subject was available prior to the establishment of the program. It is hoped that this study concerning the procedures followed and the difficulties encountered in the organization of the curriculum at Northwestern Michigan College will prove helpful to institutions who are interested in developing comparable programs.

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[12]Aaron Buchwald, "High School Yields Trained Assistants for MDs," Scope Weekly, November 28, 1956, p. 14.

[13]Corinne Smith, "MOAs—Medical Office Assistants Solve Doctor's Dilemma," The Detroit Times, March 24, 1957, p. 1.

[14]Evangeline Markwick, "The MD's Criteria for His Aide—and Her Own," Scope Weekly, January 30, 1957, p. 1.

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION

A preliminary investigation was conducted by the writer and local physicians before any plans were made regarding the proposed program. The investigation related to: (1) course content of similar curricula at other colleges, (2) endorsement of the program by the Grand Traverse, Benzie, and Leelanau Counties Medical Society, (3) starting salaries for medical secretaries in Traverse City, and (4) starting salaries for secretaries in business offices in Traverse City.

Analysis of Similar Programs

Catalogues from institutions offering training for medical secretaries were examined. The programs of seven junior colleges were studied because their size was comparable and their programs were similar to that of Northwestern Michigan College. On April 17, 1956, a letter requesting course descriptions and textbook lists was sent to seven schools, namely: Bay City Junior College, Bay City, Michigan; Everett Junior College, Everett, Washington; Gray's Harbor Junior College, Aberdeen, Washington; Flint Junior College, Flint, Michigan; Ferris Institute, Big Rapids, Michigan; Highland Park Junior College, Highland Park, Michigan; and Jackson Junior College, Jackson, Michigan.

All of the schools with one exception answered promptly with the requested information. Typical comments included: "The difficulty of the medical secretarial training may limit the size of the enrollment."

"Small enrollment may prevent offering specialized technical classes." "Only top secretarial students should be permitted to enroll in the program," and "The program should be carefully planned if it is to be successful." A letter was mailed to these schools on May 11, 1956, thanking them for their cooperation.

The course descriptions which were obtained were checked for the content and the textbooks used. Individual courses of study were checked for similarity of subject matter, and then were condensed into a Course Frequency Table. This Table, individual courses of study, and course descriptions were duplicated for future use in curriculum development. The Course Frequency Table appears as Appendix B.

MEDICAL SOCIETY ENDORSEMENT OF PROGRAM

At a regular meeting of the Grand Traverse, Benzie, and Leelanau Counties Medical Society on April 3, 1956, Dr. Power discussed the proposed training program and asked the members if they would cooperate in its development and in active participation in such a program. The members endorsed the proposed program and appointed a committee of three physicians to work with the writer in further investigation.

SURVEY OF BEGINNING SALARIES IN MEDICAL OFFICES IN TRAVERSE CITY

In an attempt to determine the possible financial reward to students participating in additional technical training, one of the members of the medical committee canvassed local physicians to determine the salary paid to medical secretaries. Although there was no positive agreement,

most of the physicians felt that they would be willing to start a college-trained medical secretary at a salary of $55 to $65 per week with substantial merit increases after six months. The maximum salary a medical secretary could earn would depend upon the length of service and the initiative of the individual.

BEGINNING SALARIES IN SIXTY OFFICES IN TRAVERSE CITY

According to a Wage Survey of sixty firms in Traverse City, the maximum weekly salary for secretaries was $82.43.[1] No figures were included in the Survey for beginning secretaries; however, college placement follow-up studies indicated that the salaries most commonly paid beginning college-trained stenographers and secretaries were from $50 to $55 per week and that students were frequently employed at a beginning rate of $1 per hour.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A meeting of physicians, and school personnel was held at James Decker Munson Hospital in June, 1956. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the results of the preliminary investigation and to answer the following questions: (1) Was a medical secretarial program needed in Traverse City? (2) Was it practical to offer such a program? (3) If such training was both needed and practical, how could it be taught with a minimum of financial outlay for teaching staff and equipment?

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[1] Michigan Bell Telephone Company 1956 Wage Survey, (Detroit: 1956.) (Mimeographed.)

Eight people representing the College and the Medical Society met for the first time in June, 1956, to discuss the possibility of developing a program for medical secretaries. The College was represented by the Director and Assistant Director of the College, the College Business Manager, and two College business teachers including the investigator. The physicians in the community were represented by the medical committee of three doctors who had been appointed in April, 1956.

It was decided that Medical Secretarial Training was needed in the community and that it could be practical if the program were carefully planned. The individuals who attended the planning meeting agreed to be known as the Advisory Committee for Medical Secretarial Training and to share the responsibility of planning the program. The curriculum was to be developed by the curriculum committee at the College. The investigator was a member of the curriculum committee. This committee would also handle catalogue publicity and determine course credit. The Business Department was given the responsibility of examining and selecting books to be used in the courses and the responsibility of starting a reference library.

The physicians agreed to determine the medical content of the program which they and other city physicians would instruct in evening lectures. These lectures were to be closely correlated with the program set up by the College. In order to acquire an understanding of the technical subject matter to be covered in the program and to appreciate its difficulty, the investigator and the second College business instructor

planned to attend all of the evening lectures and go through the laboratory training with the students.

The Committee agreed that Medical Secretarial Training should be one year in length, and that a certificate should be awarded to those students who successfully completed the year's training. It was decided that students who enrolled in Medical Secretarial Training would follow the course requirements for a two-year secretarial program as defined in the College catalogue and that specialized medical classes could be taken in lieu of elective business subjects. The program would be on a trial basis during 1956-57, and if it proved successful, would be included in the school's course of study. Until that time, the College catalogue would not list a definite program, but would include the following notation:

> A Medical Secretarial Program will be available to secretarial students beginning in the Fall Term of 1956. Students interested should consult with advisors regarding the subjects to be chosen to meet the specific requirements of the program.[2]

It was agreed that medical equipment and reference books for the program would be borrowed from private practices in the city and the facilities of local doctors' offices as well as those of James Decker Munson Hospital would be utilized whenever necessary. Two transcribing units and one dictating-transcribing unit at the College Business Department would be used for case history and letter transcription, and any

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[2]Northwestern Michigan College Catalogue, 1956-57, p. 22.

other expenditures for the program would be carefully evaluated before approved.

Advisory Committee meetings would be held periodically during the year to evaluate course content and instruction and to make changes in procedure whenever necessary.

CHAPTER III

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Medical Secretarial Training Program

A definite program for Medical Secretarial Training was not listed in the College catalogue for 1956-57; however, using the Course Frequency Table (Appendix B) as a reference, and the minimum budget as a yardstick, the following required subjects were offered.

3 Terms	Medical Dictation and Transcription	4 credit hours
3 Terms	Office Procedures	2 credit hours
3 Terms	Medical Office Procedures	2 credit hours
1 Term	Medical Laboratory Procedures	2 credit hours

It was decided that Medical Dictation and Transcription, Office Procedures, and Medical Office Procedures would be taught as regular day classes for three terms at the College; and Medical Laboratory Procedures would be taught by laboratory personnel of the James Decker Munson Hospital and local physicians in a series of ten 2-hour lectures. These lectures would be conducted at the Hospital. In addition to the lectures, students would spend thirty hours at Munson Hospital, under the supervision of the Supervisor of the X-Ray Department administering Electrocardiograph and Basal Metabolism tests to each other and practicing routine laboratory tests under the supervision of the Head Laboratory Technician.

Northwestern Michigan College Course Content

The Medical Secretarial Training Program at Northwestern Michigan College in 1956-57 consisted of three specialized classes: (1) Medical

Dictation and Transcription, (2) Medical Office Procedures, and (3) Medical Laboratory Procedures. Each of these courses was offered for the first time in 1956-57. Catalogue descriptions of the specialized classes appear below:

Medical Dictation and Transcription. Parallels Dictation and Transcription[1] with special emphasis on medical dictation for students preparing to be secretaries in medical offices, hospitals and other institutions. 3 terms, 4 credits, 5 hrs. per week.

Medical Office Procedures. Parallels Office Procedures[2] aiming to give students practical working knowledge of desirable procedures and attitudes for medical offices. 3 terms, 2 credits, 2 hrs. per week.

Medical Laboratory Procedures. Designed to train medical secretarial students in the basic procedures of laboratory work and to prepare them in certain techniques that will be useful to medical assistants. Lectures by members of the medical profession. 1 term (Winter), 2 credits, 2 hrs. per week.

Medical Dictation and Transcription

This course was taught by the regular Dictation and Transcription teacher. The medical shorthand students met as a separate class three hours per week. Because the small enrollment in Medical Dictation and Transcription did not justify a separate transcription period, medical shorthand students met with the Dictation and Transcription students for two hours, one day each week for transcription.

The text used for the medical secretaries was Dictation for the Medical Secretary by Berger and Byers, with supplementary materials taken

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[1]Northwestern Michigan College Catalogue, 1956-57, pp. 29-30.

[2]Ibid., p. 29.

from Roberts' Medical Handbook by M. Roberts; The Medical Stenographer by Smither; and the Gregg Medical Shorthand Manual and Dictionary by Effie B. Smither. Standardized five-minute takes were given from the Business Teacher, Progressive Dictation, and Previewed Dictation.

The textbook used for Medical Dictation included the following subjects: Physical Medicine, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Corrective Therapy, Educational Therapy, and Manual Arts Therapy; General Medicine and Internal Medicine; Cardiology, Gastro-Enterology, Endocrinology, Dermatology, Pediatrics and Paraplegiology; Surgery; Technical records and forms used by private physicians and by hospitals.

At first the instructor spent time previewing the highly technical vocabularies, but with so much textual material to be covered in the one-hour class period, most of the preview of vocabularies was left as the students' responsibility. There were often short vocabulary drills with special emphasis on correct spelling and definition, and little concern with the exact shorthand outlines as they were written in the texts. Many discrepancies were found in the shorthand outlines of medical terms as they were found in the various texts—thus the tendency to put minor stress on exact copies of those found in the texts.

For the final examination students were required to write in shorthand, transcribe, and define one hundred medical terms. In addition, two 5-minute medical dictations were given for transcription.

Medical Office Procedures

This course was taught by the investigator who also taught Office Procedures. Special evening lectures which are described later were correlated with the subject matter covered in Medical Office Procedures.

The text used was the Handbook for Medical Secretaries by Miriam Bredow. Supplementary readings were assigned from Letters to a Doctor's Secretary by Anna Davis Hunt, Manual for Physicians' Office Attendants by Gotten and Sprunt, The Medical Secretary by Morse, and periodicals which are described in Appendix C.

The course included: a critical analysis of the personality of a medical secretary, her responsibilities to the doctor and to the patient; practice in scheduling appointments by telephone, in person, and by letter; procedure in handling fees; procedure in handling bills, payments, and collections; medical insurance; filing procedures; medical assisting, chaperonage, the principles of sterilization; office management, medical bookkeeping; incoming and outgoing mail; procedures in working for specialists and hospitals; nurse's arithmetic related to weights and measures; care and use of the microscope; motion and time economy in the office and examining rooms; and transcription of case histories, autopsy reports, and letters from transcribing machines.

Students' assignments included one case history and vocabulary practice from transcribing units each week. Two Dictaphone belts containing special case histories for medical secretaries were obtained from the Dictaphone Corporation, and the remainder of the case histories, reports,

as well as legal testimonies, were dictated by the investigator and the second business teacher. A Comptometer dictation-transcription unit was used for this purpose.

Medical bookkeeping was discussed in one evening lecture by a representative of the Professional Management Service of Traverse City. This state-wide organization is commissioned by office managers, including physicians, to analyze their office procedures and to set up filing and bookkeeping systems. The representative developed a medical bookkeeping practice set for Northwestern Michigan College which was expanded, duplicated, and used by the students as a part of their class work.

Students encountered considerable difficulty in studying technical medical and laboratory procedures because simplified texts and reference books were not available for this purpose. Therefore, the students compiled notebooks for their future use which included their notes from evening lectures and materials distributed to them in their special classes. These notes were transcribed, outlined, and checked for accuracy. They were later duplicated and made into a syllabus which would be used as a reference for the instruction given in 1957-58.

Medical equipment and trays of instruments were borrowed from local physicians for classroom demonstration.

The students concluded their classroom training with ten hours of observation in selected doctors' offices during the spring term. A variety of specialties were observed by the students who visited the offices

of: a Urologist, a Surgeon, an Internist, an Obstetrician, and an Opthalmologist. A letter explaining the observation program (Appendix A) and a copy of the observation schedule, shown as Figure I, page 22 were taken to each of the participating doctors. The purpose of the observation program was to familiarize the students with actual physician-secretary-patient relationships and to observe how procedures may vary in medical offices.

Evening Lectures by Physicians

Evening lectures were held during the fall and winter term at the College and at the offices of two physicians. The content of these lectures was determined by the physicians who had full responsibility for presenting the material. A lecture schedule was compiled showing the lecture date, speaker, and subject. This schedule is shown as Figure II on page 23.

The material covered in these lectures included: Why Be a Medical Secretary: requirements, advantages, and responsibilities; medical ethics, patient-secretary-doctor relationships, privileged communications; Anatomy and Physiology: bones, joints, muscles, respiratory system; Circulatory System and Gastro-intestinal System: blood constituents, nervous system; Disease and Treatment: trauma, infectious disease, degenerate disease, congenital abnormalities; Office Nursing Procedures: practice in taking temperature, respiration, and blood pressure; Medical Assisting: principles of asceptic technique, sterilization of instruments and bandages, identification and handling of

FIGURE I

MEDICAL SECRETARIES' OBSERVATION SCHEDULE DURING SPRING TERM, 1956-57

Doctor	Week of May 6	Week of May 13	Week of May 20	Week of May 27	Week of June 3
Warren Cline Internist	Gladys Dame Monday 3-5	Gladys Dame Monday 3-5	Carol Hunt Tuesday 3-5	Rosie Horton Thursday 2-4	Rosie Horton Thursday 2-4
Chas. Haberlein Obstetrician	Carol Hunt Tuesday 3-5	Carol Hunt Tuesday 3-5	Gladys Dame Monday 3-5	Yvonne Hulse Tuesday 2-4	Yvonne Hulse Tuesday 2-4
Edward Stokes Surgeon	Rosie Horton Thursday 2-4	Rosie Horton Thursday 2-4	Virginia Snow Thursday 2-4	Gladys Dame Monday 3-5	Virginia Snow Thursday 2-4
Richard Thirlby Urologist	Virginia Snow Wednesday 2-4	Yvonne Hulse Tuesday 2-4	Rosie Horton Wednesday 2-4	Carol Hunt Tuesday 3-5	Gladys Dame Monday 3-5
J.G. Zimmerman Ophthalmologist	Yvonne Hulse Tuesday 2-4	Virginia Snow Thursday 2-4	Yvonne Hulse Tuesday 2-4	Virginia Snow Thursday 2-4	Carol Hunt Tuesday 3-5

FIGURE II

DATE, SPEAKER, AND LECTURE TOPIC
MEDICAL SECRETARIAL TRAINING
1956-57

DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC
October 24	Power, Thirlby	Why Be a Medical Secretary?
October 31	Thirlby, Cline	Anatomy and Physiology
November 7	Power, Cline	Circulatory System Gastro-Intestinal System
November 14	Power, Thirlby	Disease and Treatment
November 28	Thirlby	Office Nursing Procedures
December 5	Cline, Power	Medical Assisting
December 12	Thirlby, Power, Robinson	Medical Bookkeeping
April 11	Weitz	Principles of X-Ray
April 18	Weitz	Preparation for X-Ray
May 2	Sheffer	Psychosomatic Disorders
May 9	Sheffer	Psychosomatic Disorders

instruments, draping and chaperonage techniques, procedure and demonstration of injection; Medical Bookkeeping; Principles of X-Ray; Preparation of patient for X-Ray; and Psychosomatic Disorders.

Medical Laboratory Procedures

The Medical Laboratory Procedures course was taught by two physicians, the Pathologist and the Head Laboratory Technician at James Decker Munson Hospital. The course was offered in a series of ten 2-hour lecture and laboratory periods at Munson Hospital. The topic for the evening was introduced by the speaker and followed by a laboratory period in which the students practiced the procedures covered that evening. In addition, each student spent twenty hours at the Hospital practicing laboratory tests under the direction of the Head Laboratory Technician and ten hours practicing B. M. R. and E. K. G. technique under the direction of the Supervisor of X-Ray Department.

A textbook was not used for this course but the following references were used: Clinical Pathology by Wells, Manual of Clinical Laboratory Methods by Hepler, Clinical Diagnosis by Laboratory Methods by Todd and Sanford. Students took notes at all lectures which they later transcribed, outlined and duplicated. These notes were included in the syllabus which is described on page 20. A lecture schedule showing the date, speaker, and topic is shown as Figure III, page 25.

The material covered in these lectures included: Introduction to Laboratory Medicine: purpose, divisions, identification and care of

FIGURE III

DATE, SPEAKER, AND LECTURE TOPIC
MEDICAL LABORATORY PROCEDURES
WINTER TERM, 1956-57

DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC
January 9	Lossman	Introduction to Laboratory Medicine
January 16	Lossman	Explanation of Urinalysis
January 24	Flynn	Urine Tests
January 30	Flynn	Complete Blood Count
February 7	Lossman	Blood Chemistry
February 14	Lossman	Laboratory Experience
February 21	Flynn	Blood Sugar Test
February 28	Flynn	Laboratory Practice
March 7	Sweeney Cline, W.	Electrocardiography
March 14	Sweeney Cline, W.	Basal Metabolism

laboratory equipment and glassware, metric system; Explanation of Urinalysis; Urine Tests: albumin, color, turbidity, acidity, specific gravity, acetone, microscopic study; Complete Blood Count: hemoglobin, leukocyte, erythrocyte, platelets, and differential smears; Blood Chemistry: blood clotting, prevention of clotting, sedimentation rate, prothrombin time, hematocrit; Laboratory Experience in Blood Letting: veni-puncture, blood count; Blood Sugar Test: explanation, demonstration and practice in making blood-sugar tests; Laboratory Practice: sedimentation rates and microscopic studies; Electrocardiography: explanation, demonstration, and preparation of patient for an electrocardiograph test; Basal Metabolism: explanation, demonstration, and preparation of patient for a basal metabolism test.

The James Decker Munson Hospital Laboratory was utilized extensively in this course. Time was spent during the Medical Office Procedure class in microscopic study of urine and blood. Equipment including microscopes and glassware from the College Biology Department was used. Students voiced dissatisfaction concerning the use of College monocular microscopes after they had been accustomed to the binocular microscopes at the Hospital. Since most private practices have monocular microscopes, perhaps this type of microscope is preferable for initial training of medical secretarial students.

Eleven physicians, one laboratory technician, and one X-Ray technician participated with the College staff in the instruction of Medical Secretarial Training. (See Figure IV, page 27)

FIGURE IV

TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN, MEDICAL AND HOSPITAL PERSONNEL WHO PARTICIPATED IN MEDICAL SECRETARIAL TRAINING, 1956-1957

NAME	PARTICIPATION	SPECIALTY
Ted Cline, M.D.	Evening Lectures Observation Program	Surgery
Warren Cline, M.D.	Laboratory Procedures	Internal Medicine
Willa Flynn	Laboratory Procedures	Head Lab Technician Munson Hospital
Charles Haberlein, M.D.	Observation Program	Obstetrics
Robert Lossman, M.D.	Laboratory Procedures	Pathology Dept. Munson Hospital
Jean Jacobus, R.N.	Laboratory Procedures	Supervisor, X-Ray Munson Hospital
Frank Power, M.D.	Evening Lectures	Surgery
Marcus Sheffer, M.D.	Evening Lectures	Psychiatry
Edward Stokes, M.D.	Observation Program	Surgery
Bernard Sweeney, M.D.	Laboratory Procedures	Internal Medicine
Richard Thirlby, M.D.	Evening Lectures Observation Program	Urology
Harry Weitz, M.D.	Evening Lectures	Radiology Dept. Munson Hospital
J. G. Zimmerman, M.D.	Observation Program	Ophthalmology

CHAPTER IV

STUDENT DATA AND FOLLOW-UP

Nine students enrolled for Medical Secretarial Training in the fall term, 1956. Five students were freshmen, three were sophomores, and one girl was a part-time student who was employed as a secretary in a local office. All of the students with one exception were enrolled in the required courses: Office Procedures, Medical Office Procedures, and Medical Dictation and Transcription. One student who had no previous shorthand training enrolled in beginning shorthand rather than Medical Dictation and Transcription.

National Registry of Medical Secretaries

During the year, several students asked the investigator about the possibility of becoming registered with the National Registry of Medical Secretaries. This question was presented to the Advisory Committee who suggested that investigation be made concerning the requirements for registration. Considerable correspondence was carried on with the Registry which asked that an outline of the training program be submitted to them. The requirements for registry were satisfied by the course content of Medical Secretarial Training at Northwestern Michigan College. Four students became Registered Medical Secretaries upon the completion of their training in June, 1957.

STUDENT FOLLOW-UP

Two students withdrew from College at the end of fall term to be married.

Two students enrolled as sophomore students at Northwestern Michigan College, 1957-58. One of these students was employed part time during the 1956-57 school year as a laboratory worker at the Osteopathic Hospital.

One student who was employed as a part-time medical secretary to a Traverse City Internist during the winter term of 1956-57 accepted employment as a full-time medical assistant in the same office.

Another student who was employed part time during spring term, 1956-57, at the Northport Hospital, Northport, Michigan became a full-time medical secretary and laboratory assistant at that hospital.

One student accepted employment as a receptionist to five physicians in a medical building in Traverse City.

The Burns Clinic in Petoskey, Michigan, employed the fourth student, and Thirlby Clinic in Traverse City employed the fifth student who worked there part time during the 1956-57 school year.

The results of an informal follow-up concerning duties of the five students who are now employed in medical offices are shown in Figure V, page 31. The small number of students represented in Figure V limits its value for curriculum evaluation, but it does serve as a guide to the duties which may be anticipated by future medical secretarial students. Frequent correspondence and conversation with the students who are now working in medical offices indicate their enthusiasm for their

work. A formal follow-up of the graduates of Medical Secretarial Training at Northwestern Michigan College will be made in 1960.

FIGURE V

DUTIES PERFORMED BY FIVE STUDENTS NOW
SECRETARIES IN MEDICAL OFFICES
SEPTEMBER, 1957

Duties	Secretary No.1	Secretary No.2	Secretary No.3	Secretary No.4	Secretary No.5
Transcribe letters from dictation	X		X		X
Transcribe letters from recording units	X	X	X	X	X
Transcribe case histories from dictation	X		X		
Transcribe case histories from recording units	X	X	X	X	
Schedule appointments		X	X	X	X
Answer telephone	X	X	X	X	X
File letters, case histories, etc.	X	X	X	X	X
Use duplicating machines			X		
Prepare and mail statements	X	X		X	
Compose collection letters	X				
Compose other letters	X		X		
Fill out insurance and related forms	X		X	X	
Assist with physical examinations		X		X	
Assist with minor surgery		X			
Drape patients for examinations		X		X	
Prepare and sterilize instruments	X	X			
Take temperature		X			
Take respiration		X			
Take blood pressure		X			
Take pulse		X			
Prepare patient for E.K.G.	X	X			
Prepare patient for B.M.R.	X	X			
Prepare patient for X-Ray	X	X			
Prepare injections		X			
Perform urinalyses	X	X			
Perform blood tests	X	X			
Other duties (gastric washings & analyses, bookkeeping, ordering supplies, etc.)	X	X	X		X

Note: Performance of duties listed is indicated by an "X".

CHAPTER V

PUBLICITY

A small enrollment in Medical Secretarial Training was expected in the school year, 1956-57; however, it was hoped that the enrollment would increase substantially the following year. Several methods of publicizing the program were used and are described below:

The investigator and the second business teacher were interviewed on a weekly television program, "Northwestern Michigan College on the Air." The Medical Secretarial Program was briefly outlined on this twelve-minute program in November, 1956.

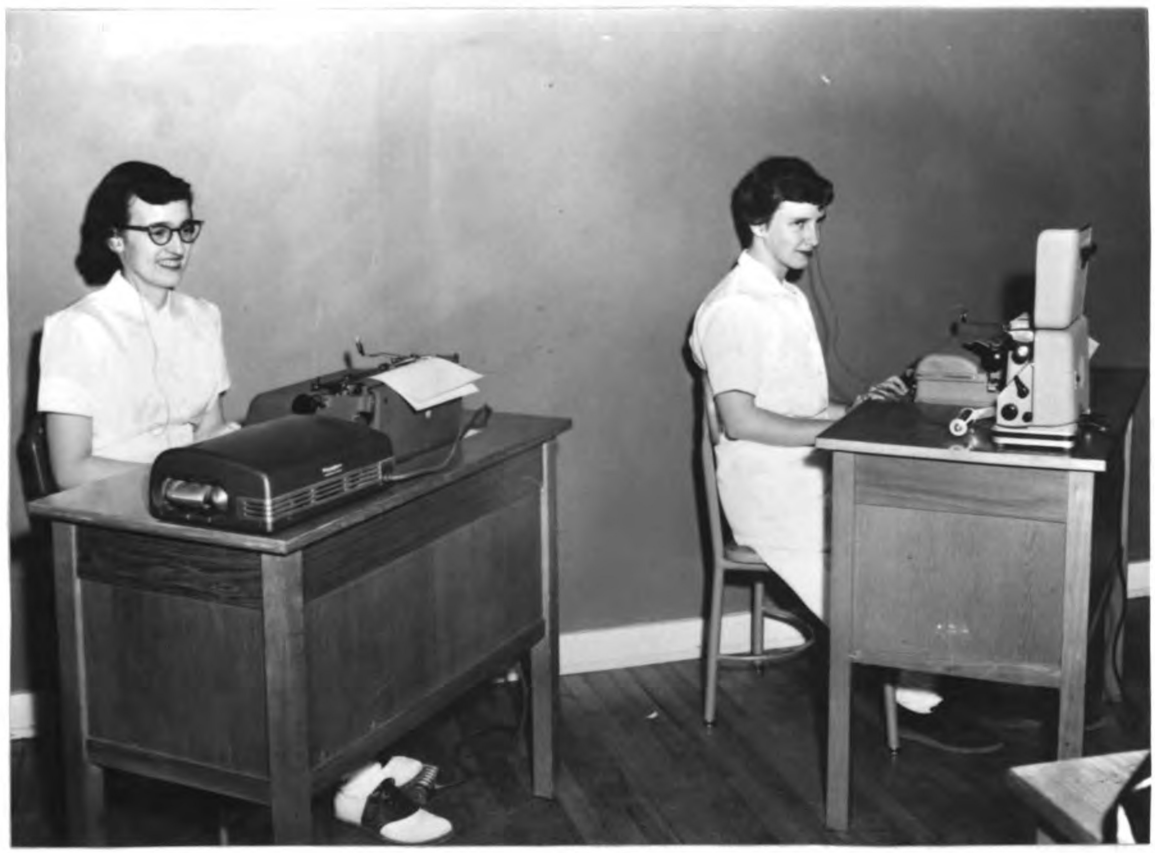
College and Career Days in Traverse City and four other cities in the surrounding area were attended by the investigator and the other business teacher. Displays featuring photographs of the medical secretarial students in various phases of their training were shown. These photographs are shown as Figures VI, VII, and VIII. A medical secretarial student accompanied the teachers to talk with students who were interested in the training.

The investigator and a medical secretarial student presented a resume of the history and development of Medical Secretarial Training on the television program, "Limelight," on April 17, 1957, which features new happenings in Traverse City.

The publicity was favorably received and resulted in many letters requesting additional information about the training program.

FIGURE VI

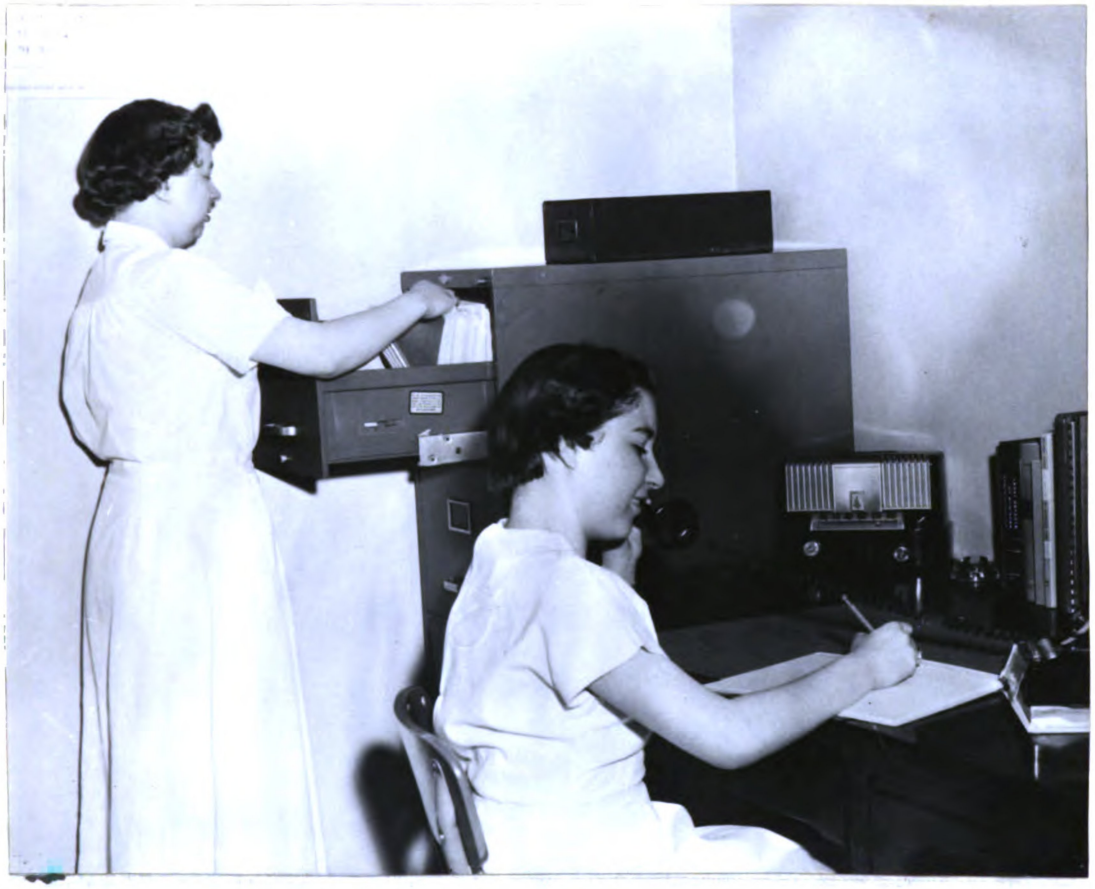
MEDICAL SECRETARIAL STUDENTS IN VARIOUS STAGES OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM, 1956-57



Students preparing to transcribe case histories from: (left) Dictaphone and (right) Comptometer Transcribing Units.

FIGURE VII

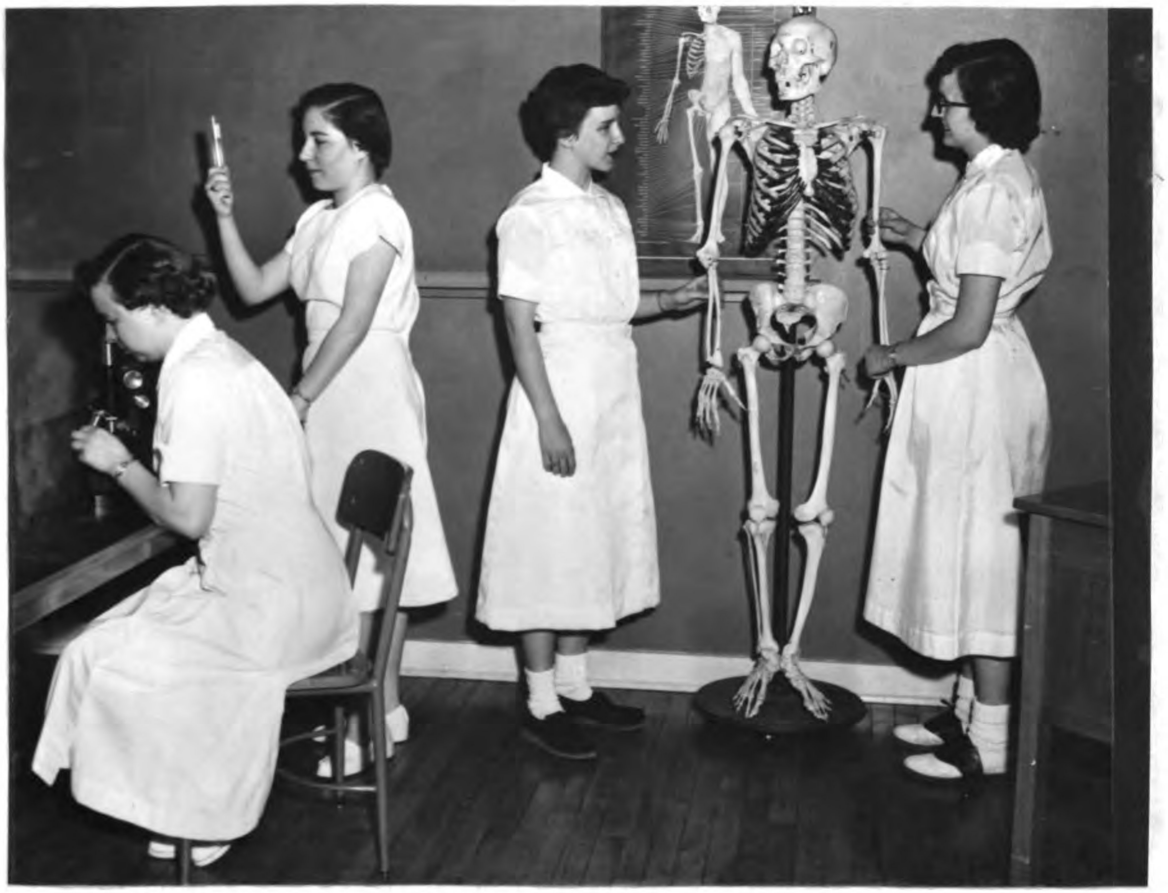
MEDICAL SECRETARIAL STUDENTS IN VARIOUS STAGES OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM, 1956-57



Student (left) filing patients' charts and student (right) scheduling appointments by telephone.

FIGURE VIII

MEDICAL SECRETARIAL STUDENTS IN VARIOUS STAGES OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM, 1956-57



Two students (left) performing urinalysis and (right) two students identifying bones in skeleton.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The need for Medical Secretarial Training in Traverse City, Michigan was made apparent to the investigator and to Northwestern Michigan College administrators by the interest of students and local physicians. The program was made possible through the cooperation of the Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Benzie Counties Medical Society with Northwestern Michigan College. The program is now in its second year and is expanding in size and scope with investigation now being made for providing additional training for secretaries already employed in medical offices who wish to continue their education. This study traces the development of the program from its beginning to its second year, and it is hoped that it will be of value to individuals who are given the responsibility of developing similar programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to record the events related to the development and establishment of a medical secretarial curriculum in a community college in a city in northern Michigan.

Procedures Used

The following steps were taken to establish a Medical Secretarial Program at Northwestern Michigan College: (1) Investigation of the curricula at schools similar to Northwestern Michigan College which offer

medical secretarial training, (2) Enlistment of the aid of professional medical personnel in Traverse City in the development and instruction of the program, (3) Appointment of an Advisory Committee of physicians and school personnel who would share the responsibility of establishing and continuing the program, and (4) Development of a curriculum for the one-year program.

Results of the Study

A one-year training program for medical secretaries was established at Northwestern Michigan College in 1956 in Traverse City, Michigan. The program was planned and developed under the joint auspices of the Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Benzie Counties Medical Society and Northwestern Michigan College. Two college business instructors, eight physicians, and one hospital laboratory technician were involved in the instruction of three required subjects: Medical Dictation and Transcription, Medical Office Procedures, and Medical Laboratory Procedures. Nine students enrolled in the fall term, 1956. Seven students completed the year's training and five of these students are currently employed in medical offices.

CONCLUSIONS

In June, 1957 a meeting of the Advisory Committee was held to evaluate the Medical Secretarial Program. On the basis of observations made by the medical personnel and the college instructors during the 1956-57 training, the following conclusions were made.

1. A one-year training program does not provide sufficient time for students to acquire related knowledges in biology and psychology.

2. The requirements for graduation from the program were not clearly defined.

3. Simplified textbooks or supplements are needed for the course in Medical Laboratory Procedures.

4. The College biology laboratory should be used to provide laboratory experience.

5. Medical Office Procedures which met two hours per week with additional evening lectures and observations did not carry sufficient credit for the number of class hours involved.

6. Any variation in the skill backgrounds of the students in typewriting and shorthand should be known before the students are enrolled in the medical secretarial program.

7. All applicants for the program should be carefully screened prior to enrollment relative to scholastic ability, skill-subject performance, and personality traits.

8. Participation of local medical personnel was very helpful in the planning and instruction of the program.

9. The Advisory Committee gave valuable assistance in the development of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the June meeting, the Advisory Committee presented the following recommendations to the Northwestern Michigan College

Administration in an effort to improve the Medical Secretarial Program for 1957-58.

Recommendations to Northwestern Michigan College Administration

1. It is recommended that the one-year training program be changed to a two-year program which will provide more time to develop the capabilities of the students in related subjects as well as in their technical medical training. A two-year program will fulfill the requirements for graduation with an Associate of Commerce Degree and a Medical Secretarial Certificate. (See Figure IX, page 42)

2. It is recommended that the College secure simplified textbooks and supplementary materials which will be used in Medical Laboratory Procedures.

3. It is recommended that Medical Laboratory Procedures be offered at the College biology laboratory in a series of evening lectures. College equipment should be used and additional equipment should be purchased for the instruction of the course. Two physicians, specialists in Internal Medicine, should instruct the class.

4. It is recommended that the name of Medical Office Procedures, two credits, be changed to Medical Office Techniques and carry three credits.

5. It is recommended that the applicants for Medical Secretarial Training be carefully screened prior to enrollment in the program relative to their scholastic ability, skill subject performance, and personality traits.

6. It is recommended that the Advisory Committee continue to function and meet whenever necessary with the investigator serving as liason between the College and the medical personnel in Traverse City.

Recommendations to Other Schools

Inquiries from interested persons throughout the state attest the concern of other schools in similar programs. It must be observed that any school that establishes a training program for medical secretaries will encounter problems that are peculiar to the school's facilities and to the city in which the school is located. Evaluation of the program at Northwestern Michigan College points up some of the factors which appear to be necessary for success in developing similar programs. It is recommended that the following factors be considered.

1. Medical secretarial training should be carefully planned. The involvement of interested medical personnel in the community in curriculum development is highly desirable. Curriculum development can also be aided by other citizens of the community. Such involvement will help insure that the curriculum of the school develops into a community program broad enough to meet the wants and needs of the participating area.[1]

2. The Business Department provides the core of the program since many of the subjects in the total training program are taught in this department. At least one of the business teachers should have experience in medical secretaryship or participate in the actual training program

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[1]Valade, op. cit. p. 128.

in order to gain an understanding of the nature of the subject matter and an appreciation of the difficulty of the specialized training required.

3. If the Science Department is not strong in its offerings, involvement of local medical and hospital personnel is essential.

4. Only students who have above-average scholastic ability and desirable personal qualities should be permitted to enroll in the program.

5. High standards should be maintained in order to produce high-quality medical secretaries.

FIGURE IX

MEDICAL SECRETARIAL PROGRAM LISTED IN 1957-58 COLLEGE CATALOGUE[2]

FIRST YEAR		SECOND YEAR	
Fall		**Fall**	
Ess. of Com. (LC 101)	3	Hum or SS	3
Biol. Sci. (Sci 111)	4	Office Proced. (Bus 251)	3
Beg. Typing* (Bus 131)	2	Med. Dictation (Bus 227)	4
Beg. Shorthand* (Bus 121)	4	Med. Office Techniques (Bus 256)	3
Electives	2	Electives	2
P.E.	1		
	16		15
Winter		**Winter**	
Ess. of Com. (LC 102)	3	Hum or SS	3
Biol. Sci. (Sci 112)	4	Office Proced. (Bus 252)	3
Int. Typing* (Bus 132)	2	Med. Dictation (Bus 228)	4
Int. Shorthand* (Bus 122)	4	Med. Office Techniques (Bus 257)	3
Electives	2	Med. Lab. Procedures (Bus 260)	2
P.E.	1		
	16		15
Spring		**Spring**	
Ess. of Com. (LC 103)	3	Hum or SS	3
Biol. Sci. (Sci 113)	4	Filing Proced. (Bus 254)	3
Adv. Typing* (Bus 133)	2	Med. Dictation (Bus 229)	4
Adv. Shorthand* (Bus 123)	4	Med. Office Techniques (Bus 258)	3
Electives	2	Electives	2
P.E.	1		
	16		15

*If competency is demonstrated in this subject, an elective may be substituted. Recommended electives: Introduction to Business, Secretarial Machines, Accounting, Psychology.

Note: The two-year Medical Secretarial Program completes requirements for graduation with an Associate of Commerce Degree and a Medical Secretarial Certificate.

[2] Northwestern Michigan College Catalogue, 1957-58, p. 23.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO SCHOOLS ASKING FOR CURRICULUM INFORMATION

LETTER TO SCHOOLS THANKING THEM FOR CURRICULUM INFORMATION

LETTER TO PARTICIPATING PHYSICIANS EXPLAINING OBSERVATION PROGRAM

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

A Community College

TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN

Letter to Schools Asking for Curriculum Information

April 17, 1956

_____

_____

_____

Dear Mr. _____:

The Business Department of Northwestern Michigan College is considering the addition of Medical Secretarial Training to its present curriculum. Your program for such training interested me, and I would like to take this opportunity to ask questions concerning it.

Do you offer Medical Dictation as a part of the regular shorthand training, and if so, what textbook is used?

If you have additional information regarding Medical Secretarial Training such as course outlines, follow-up studies, or comments in general as to the success of the program, I will certainly be happy to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

Jacqueline Tompkins, Instructor
Business Education Department

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

A Community College

TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN

Letter to Schools Thanking Them for Curriculum Information

May 11, 1956

_____

_____

_____

Dear Mr. _____:

Thank you for your letter of _____. I certainly do appreciate the courtesy and helpfulness of your prompt reply.

We are still in the preliminary stages of developing our Medical Secretarial Program and find the comments on your program very helpful.

We will doubtless have many questions as we develop our program. We hope we may be able to call upon you for additional information whenever it is necessary.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Tompkins, Instructor
Business Education Department

NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE

A Community College

TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN

Letter to Participating Physicians Explaining Observation Program

May 3, 1957

_____

_____

_____

Dear Doctor _____:

Thank you for your cooperation in allowing the medical secretarial students of Northwestern Michigan College to observe your office procedures for the next five weeks. These girls have had an introduction to the theories of medical secretarial training, and we believe that making observations in doctors' offices will be beneficial in helping them make successful adaptations to their respective positions.

Medical studies experienced by these students have included lectures by doctors in physiology and anatomy, ethics and professional behavior, radiology, psychiatry, and pathology. Instructions in laboratory procedures were followed by actual work experiences which included: urines, blood counts, examinations for blood sugar, and microscopic studies.

Regular class work included: using the telephone, making appointments, taking case histories, assisting the doctor, handling correspondence, and other routine procedures.

If you have any questions regarding this program, please feel free to call Mrs. Tompkins or Miss Baver at the College, WI 6-5650.

Sincerely yours,

Pauline Baver

Jacqueline Tompkins

APPENDIX B

COURSE FREQUENCY TABLE

COURSE FREQUENCY TABLE OF MEDICAL SECRETARIAL SUBJECTS
OFFERED AT SEVEN INSTITUTIONS, JUNE, 1956

Freshman Year							
COURSE TITLE	Bay City, Mich.	Everett, Wash.	Big Rapids, Mich. (Ferris Institute)	Flint, Mich.	Gray's Harbor, Wash.	Highland Park, Mich.	Jackson, Mich.
	S*	T**	T	S	T	S	S
Accounting		2			2	1	
Anatomy and Physiology			1	2			
Apprenticeship						1	
Biology			1		1		
Biology for Medical & Dental Assists.					1	1	
Business English					1	1	
Business Organization				1			
Chemistry			2				
Dictation & Transcription		1		1			
Elective	1					1	1
English I & II	1		3	2	1	1	2
First Aid			1		1		
Health Education			3		1		
Hygiene	1		1				1
Mathematics	1					1	1
Medical Laboratory Procedures			1			1	
Nursing Arts						1	
Office Practice		1				1	
Office Practice Co-op		1	1				
Physical Education	2			2	3		2
Physical Science					2		
Physiology	1		1				
Political Science			2	1			
Psychology			2				
Shorthand	2	1	2	2		1	2
Social Science					1		
Typewriting	2		2	2	3	1	2
Zoology							1

Note: *S indicates Semester and **T indicates Term.

COURSE FREQUENCY TABLE OF MEDICAL SECRETARIAL SUBJECTS
OFFERED AT SEVEN INSTITUTIONS, JUNE, 1956

Sophomore Year							
COURSE TITLE	Bay City, Mich.	Everett, Wash.	Big Rapids, Mich. (Ferris Institute)	Flint, Mich.	Gray's Harbor, Wash.	Highland Park, Mich.	Jackson, Mich.
	S*	T**	T	S	T	S	S
Accounting	1						1
Anatomy and Physiology					1		
Biology	2						2
Business Correspondence				1			
Business Machines				1			
Business Practice	1						
Dictation and Transcription	1		2	2			
Elective	2		1		2		1
English					1		
Filing	1						
Humanities			1				
Laboratory Techniques			2				
Medical Ethics			1				
Medical Vocabulary				1			
Microbiology					1		
Nursing Techniques			1				
Office Practice			1		3		3
Office Practice Co-op			1	2	1		
Physical Education					3		2
Political Science	1						1
Psychology	1			2			1
Social Science			1		2		
Speech				1			

Note: *S indicates Semester and **T indicates Term.

APPENDIX C

MEDICAL SECRETARIAL REFERENCE BOOKS

MEDICAL SHORTHAND REFERENCE BOOKS

MEDICAL AND CLINICAL REFERENCE BOOKS

NURSING ARTS REFERENCE BOOKS

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