Dear Prospective Medical Assisting Student:

I am pleased that you are interested in this exciting field, and I hope that this booklet answers your questions about the Medical Assisting Program (MAS) at Mount Wachusett Community College. The Board of Education approved this two-year degree program on April 15, 1997; and the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) awarded the program a full seven-year accreditation in April 2000. As a result of this accreditation, graduates of the MAS program are eligible to sit for the national Certified Medical Assisting (CMA) exam. This exam is offered twice a year in January and in June at Mount Wachusett Community College.

By completing an informational interview with me prior to registering for classes, the student may be assured that his/her schedule will be designed to complete the course requirements in a timely manner. Please give me a call at 978-630-9357 or email me at s_deese@mwcc.mass.edu to schedule a meeting.

The Medical Assisting field is expected to continue to grow throughout the entire United States and will provide a great number of jobs for graduates.

Sincerely,

Sebelle G. Deese, Director

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Fill out college admission application
- Submit high school diploma or GED certificate

SPECIFIC MAS REQUIREMENTS

- Meet the Technical Standards (found in this document)
- Complete immunization requirements
- Complete a TB test
- Complete a physical examination
- Purchase health insurance
- Purchase liability insurance
- Show chickenpox immunity
- Complete CPR training
COURSEWORK

Several courses are offered only in the semester in which they are shown in the College catalog, and new students must be very careful to register for these courses when they are offered. As you plan your schedule for the upcoming semesters, it is important for you to understand that if you do not take courses in the semester in which they are offered, you will have to wait an entire year before they are offered again. In order to successfully plan your part- or full-time college load, please contact the Director for assistance.

BSS 153 Keyboarding I is not listed in the 63-credit curriculum; however, it is a prerequisite for many of the MAS courses. Therefore, if a student has limited keyboarding skills, BSS 153 must be successfully completed before the student attempts to take the MAS courses that have BSS 153 as a prerequisite.

The MAS program includes two unpaid externships. MAS 210 is an 80-hour administrative experience in a medical facility. It is available after the student has successfully completed all courses in semester one and two of the curriculum. MAS 310 is a 160-hour clinical experience in a medical facility. It is available after the student has successfully completed all courses in semesters one, two, and three. The student may be expected to travel up to one hour for the externship placement. Child care and transportation concerns are solely the student’s responsibility.

Students must receive a grade of 77 (C+) in each BIO and MAS course in order to remain a student in good standing in the MAS program.
**What Does a Medical Assistant Do?**

**Definition of the medical assisting profession**

Medical assisting is an allied health profession whose practitioners function as members of the health care delivery team and perform administrative and clinical procedures.

**Nature of the Work**

Medical assistants perform routine administrative and clinical tasks to keep healthcare delivery settings running smoothly. Medical assistants should not be confused with physician assistants who examine, diagnose, and treat patients under the direct supervision of a physician.

The duties of medical assistants vary from office to office depending on office location, size, and specialty. In small practices, medical assistants are usually "generalists," handling both administrative and clinical duties and reporting directly to an office manager, physician, or other health practitioner. Those in large practices tend to specialize in a particular area under the supervision of department administrators.

Medical assistants perform many administrative duties. They answer telephones, greet patients, update and file patient medical records, fill out insurance forms, handle correspondence, schedule appointments, arrange for hospital admission and laboratory services, and handle billing and bookkeeping.

Clinical duties vary according to state law and include taking medical histories and recording vital signs, explaining treatment procedures to patients, preparing patients for examination, and assisting the physician during the examination. Medical assistants collect and prepare laboratory specimens or perform basic laboratory tests on the premises, dispose of contaminated supplies, and sterilize medical instruments. They instruct patients about medication and special diets, prepare and administer medications as directed by a physician, authorize drug refills as directed, telephone prescriptions to a pharmacy, draw blood, prepare patients for x-rays, take electrocardiograms, remove sutures, and change dressings.

Medical assistants may also arrange examining room instruments and equipment, purchase and maintain supplies and equipment, and keep waiting and examining rooms neat and clean.

Assistants who specialize have additional duties. Podiatric medical assistants make castings of feet, expose and develop x-rays, and assist podiatrists in surgery. Ophthalmic medical assistants help ophthalmologists provide medical eye care. They administer diagnostic tests, measure and record vision, and test the functioning of eyes and eye muscles. They also show patients how to use eye dressings, protective shields, and safety glasses, and how to insert, remove, and care for contact lenses. Under the
direction of the physician, they may administer medications, including eye drops. They also maintain optical and surgical instruments and assist the ophthalmologist in surgery.

**Working Conditions**

Medical assistants work in well-lighted, clean environments. They constantly interact with other people, and may have to handle several responsibilities at once. Most full-time medical assistants work a regular forty-hour week. Some work part-time, evenings, or weekends.

**Employment**

Medical assistants held about 225,000 jobs in 1996. Seven in 10 jobs were in physicians offices, and more than one in ten were in offices of other health practitioners such as chiropractors, optometrists, and podiatrists. The rest were in hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities.
Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

Most employers prefer to hire graduates of formal programs in medical assisting. Formal programs in medical assisting are offered in vocational-technical high schools, postsecondary vocational schools, community and junior colleges, and in colleges and universities. Postsecondary programs usually last either one year, resulting in a certificate or diploma, or two years, resulting in an associate degree. Courses cover anatomy, physiology, and medical terminology, as well as typing, transcription, recordkeeping, accounting, and insurance processing. Students learn laboratory techniques, clinical and diagnostic procedures, pharmaceutical principles, medication administration, and first aid. They study office practices, patient relations, medical law, and ethics. Accredited programs include an externship that provides practical experience in physicians’ offices, hospitals, or other health care facilities.

Two agencies accredit programs in medical assisting: the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES). In 1997, there were about 350 medical assisting programs accredited by CAAHEP and over 150 accredited by ABHES. The Committee on Accreditation for Ophthalmic Medical Personnel accredited 18 programs in ophthalmic medical assisting.

Although there is no licensing for medical assistants, some states require them to take a test or a short course before they can take x-rays or perform other specific clinical tasks. Employers prefer to hire experienced workers or certified applicants who have passed a national examination, indicating that the medical assistant meets certain standards of competence. The American Association of Medical Assistants awards the Certified Medical Assistant credential; the American Medical Technologists awards the Registered Medical Assistant credential; the American Society of Podiatric Medical Assistants awards the Podiatric Medical Assistant Certified credential; and the Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology awards the Ophthalmic Medical Assistant credential at three levels: Certified Ophthalmic Assistant, Certified Ophthalmic Technician, and Certified Ophthalmic Medical Technologist.

Because medical assistants deal with the public, they must be neat and well groomed and have a courteous, pleasant manner. Medical assistants must be able to put patients at ease and explain physicians’ instructions. They must respect the confidential nature of medical information. Clinical duties require a reasonable level of manual dexterity and visual acuity.

Medical assistants may be able to advance to office manager. They may qualify for a wide variety of administrative support occupations, or may teach medical assisting. Some, with additional education, enter other health occupations such as nursing and medical technology.
**Job Outlook**

Employment of medical assistants is expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through the year 2006 as the health services industry expands due to technological advances in medicine, and a growing and aging population. It is one of the fastest growing occupations.

Employment growth will be driven by the increase in the number of group practices, clinics, and other health care facilities that need a high proportion of support personnel, particularly the flexible medical assistant who can handle both administrative and clinical duties. Medical assistants primarily work in outpatient settings, where much faster than average growth is expected.

In view of the preference of many health care employers for trained personnel, job prospects should be best for medical assistants with formal training or experience, particularly those with certification.

**Earnings**

The earnings of medical assistants vary widely, depending on experience, skill level, and location. According to the 1997 Staff Salary Survey published by the Health Care Group, average hourly wages for medical assistants with less than two years of experience ranged from $8.07 to $10.90 in 1996. Average hourly wages for medical assistants with more than five years of experience ranged from $10.38 to $13.46. Average hourly earnings in central Massachusetts range from $12 to $17.

**Related Occupations**

Workers in other medical support occupations include medical secretaries, hospital admitting clerks, pharmacy helpers, medical record clerks, dental assistants, occupational therapy aides, and physical therapy aides.

**For More Information**

Information about career opportunities, CAAHEP-accredited educational programs in medical assisting, and the Certified Medical Assistant exam is available from:

**The American Association of Medical Assistants**
20 North Wacker Dr., Suite 1575
Chicago, IL 60606-2903

For a list of ABHES-accredited educational programs in medical assisting, write:

**Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools**
803 W. Broad Street, Suite 730
Falls Church, VA 22046
Information about career opportunities and the Registered Medical Assistant certification exam is available from:

Registered Medical Assistants of American Medical Technologists
710 Higgins Rd.
Park Ridge, IL 60068-5765

Information about career opportunities, training programs, and the Certified Ophthalmic Assistant exam is available from:

Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology
2025 Woodlane Dr.
St. Paul, MN 55125-2995

Information about careers for podiatric assistants is available from:

American Society of Podiatric Medical Assistants
2124 S. Austin Blvd.
Cicero, IL 60650
MEDICAL ASSISTING ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

- Use proper telephone techniques
- Maintain appointment calendar
- Fill out appointment cards
- Transcribe medical documents using correct grammar, spelling, and format
- Perform basic secretarial skills
- Apply computer concepts to office procedures
- Complete receipts for patients
- File and retrieve medical records
- Enter information in medical records
- Compose and type written documents
- Design office forms
- Complete records release forms
- Record information on lab sheets
- Maintain patient ledgers
- Code diagnoses and procedures
- Complete HCFA forms
- Maintain daily accounting journal
- Maintain monthly accounting records
- Maintain office checkbook
- Make bank deposits
- Reconcile bank statements
- Write checks
- Maintain a petty cash account
- Maintain payroll records
- Maintain physician’s professional schedule and travel arrangements
- Perform within ethical boundaries
- Maintain confidentiality
- Work as a team member
- Show initiative and responsibility
- Treat all patients with empathy and impartiality
- Use medical terminology appropriately
MEDICAL ASSISTING CLINICAL TASKS

- Interview and take patient history
- Take patient vital signs
- Give injections
- Draw blood
- Collect and process specimens
- Perform urinalysis testing
- Perform strep tests
- Prepare patients for procedures
- Take patients to examination room
- Assist patients with correct examining position
- Assist physician with examination and treatment
- Remove sutures
- Dress wounds
- Use universal precautions to prevent the spread of Disease
- Screen and follow-up patient test results
- Prepare and administer meds as directed by Physician
- Maintain medication records
- Recognize emergencies
- Perform first aid and CPR
- Instruct patients with special needs
- Teach patients methods of health promotion and Disease prevention
- Orient and train personnel
- Autoclaving/sterilization
- Electrocardiograms (EKGs)
- Pregnancy testing
- Sterile tray set-up

Upon completion of the two-year MAS program, the graduate will be able to choose from the following options:

1. A position using administrative tasks only
2. A position using clinical tasks only
3. A position using a combination of administrative and clinical tasks
The Medical Assisting Program is designed to train students to be able to work in all aspects of the medical office including front office and back office duties. Front office duties typically encompass the clerical aspects of the office, whereas back office duties encompass the clinical and laboratory aspects.

### Semester I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENG 101</td>
<td>English Composition I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS 101</td>
<td>Medical Secretarial Procedures I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS 102</td>
<td>Medical Terminology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIO 115</td>
<td>Human Biology</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAT 120</td>
<td>Introduction to Mathematics I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semester I Total Credits: 16

### Semester II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENG 102</td>
<td>English Composition II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS 203</td>
<td>Medical Secretarial Procedures II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSS 236</td>
<td>Word I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS 201</td>
<td>Medical Machine Transcription I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS 202</td>
<td>Medical Coding and Billing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PER 126</td>
<td>Fitness and Wellness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semester II Total Credits: 16

### May or June

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAS 210</td>
<td>Externship I</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Semester III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAS 306</td>
<td>Medical Assisting Lab Procedures</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS 307</td>
<td>Medical Assisting Clinical Procedures</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS 308</td>
<td>Principles of Pharmacology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSY 105</td>
<td>Introduction to Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semester III Total Credits: 17
### Semester IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MAS 309</td>
<td>Medical Legal Concepts, Practices, and Ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAS 310</td>
<td>Externship II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanities Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Elective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommended Electives for General Electives:**

- BUS 125
- BSS 238
- HST 140
- SPA 109
- MAS 303

**Total Credits:** 63
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

ENG 101 ENGLISH COMPOSITION I
A course designed to meet the needs of students to communicate effectively through written expression. The writing process is emphasized.
Prerequisite: ENG 100 or placement. Fall and spring.

ENG 102 ENGLISH COMPOSITION II
Emphasizes reading and writing about literature. Writing assignments encourage careful reading and provide the student with such important rhetorical skills as marshaling evidence, formulating generalizations, and making interpretive judgments. The various genres: short story, novel, poetry, and drama engage curiosity, stimulate imagination, and provide pleasurable reading.
Prerequisites: ENG 101 and RDG 100, or placement. Fall and spring.

MAS 201 MEDICAL MACHINE TRANSCRIPTION I
This is a beginning medical transcription course designed to provide students with a working knowledge of the transcription of medical reports. Medical reports will be transcribed from ten individual case studies, each of which concerns a specific system of the body. The case studies have been taken from hospital medical records. The medical reports included are history and physical examinations, radiology reports, operative reports, pathology reports, requests for consultation, discharge summaries, death summaries, and autopsy reports.
Prerequisites: BSS153 and MAS102. Spring.

MAS 202 MEDICAL INSURANCE CODING AND BILLING
This course is designed to introduce the students interested in working in healthcare providers offices to the major nationwide medical insurance programs, to give students a basic knowledge of the national diagnostic and procedural coding systems using the ICD-9 CM and the CPT coding books, and to assist student in understanding the importance of processing and filing claim forms correctly, efficiently, and in a timely manner.
Prerequisites: BSS153 and MAS102. Spring.

BIO 115 HUMAN BIOLOGY
An introductory study of the human body. The basic principles of cellular biology, tissues and organ systems as well as the presentation of aspects related to the causative agents of disease form the major aspects of Human Biology. In addition,
elements of chemistry will focus on fundamental nutrition and its importance of the body. Three hours of lecture, two hours of lab. Prerequisites: RDG100, ENG100, (BIO109 encouraged). Fall and Spring.

**MAT120 INTRODUCTION TO MATHEMATICS I**
This is an introductory algebra course for the student who has little or no background in algebra. Topics include operations on real numbers and variable expressions, solving equations, polynomials, graphing of linear equations, and techniques of problem solving. Prerequisite: MAT 100 or placement. Fall and spring.

**MAS 210 EXTERNSHIP I**
In this course students will apply knowledge, perform administrative procedures, and develop professional attitudes for interacting with other professionals and healthcare consumers in the actual medical office or clinic. This will involve a two-week, 80-hour experience at an approved clinical site of Mount Wachusett Community College. Prerequisite: Completion of all courses in Semester I and II of the Medical Assisting Degree Program. May-June.

**MAS 306 MEDICAL ASSISTING LAB PROCEDURES**
Students are introduced to the field of Clinical Laboratory Science and learn to perform the following: use quality control principles during patient, specimen, instrument and reagent preparation; prepare and maintain quality control records; perform routine urinalysis, perform record results for basic hematological, chemistry, serologic and microbiologic tests; collect and label biological specimens including blood, urine, stool, sputum, throat and vaginal; process, prepare, store, deliver and dispose of specimens along with collection equipment; utilize universal precautions and laboratory safety protocols. Two hours lecture, two hours lab. Prerequisites: MAS102 and BIO115. Fall.

**MAS 307 MEDICAL ASSISTING CLINICAL PROCEDURES**
Students will learn to perform clinical duties such as apply aseptic technique with infection control, perform selected tests that aid with diagnosis and treatment, prepare and administer medications, run electrocardiogram and record results, take vital signs, recognize emergencies, prepare/maintain treatment areas, interview and take patient history, prepare patients for procedures, assist with exams and treatments, screen and follow-up test results, and maintain records. Three hours lecture, two hours lab. Prerequisites: MAS 102 and BIO 115. Fall.

**MAS 308 PRINCIPLES OF PHARMACOLOGY**
This course reflects current and commonly used practices, procedures, medications, and drug preparations. Emphasis is placed in four area: mathematics and dosage calculations; introduction to pharmacology; drugs, vitamins and minerals, and substance abuse; and effects of medications on the body systems. This course provides essential information about mathematics and pharmacology to any health care professional. Prerequisites: BIO 115 or higher, MAT 120 or higher. Fall.
MAS 309 MEDICAL LEGAL CONCEPTS, PRACTICES, AND ETHICS
This course is designed to prepare students to work in a medical office. All aspects of medical employment are explored from new laws relevant to the medical office to the OSHA, DEA, and CDC requirements most important to medical office workers. The AAMA’s DACUM Analysis was used as a guide in the preparation of this course. Prerequisites: MAS 101 and MAS 102. Spring.

MAS 101 MEDICAL SECRETARIAL PROCEDURES I (MSP I)
This is the first semester of a comprehensive two-semester course sequence designed to provide the student with the skill, knowledge, and attitude necessary to manage a medical office. These tasks include interacting with patients, using the telephone, scheduling appointments, processing information, managing medical reports, word processing medical correspondence, completing accounting transactions, understanding insurance, billing patients, and understanding medical ethics and confidentiality.

MSP I is the first half of a two-course requirement for MOC and MAS students. In MSP I, the student learns the manual method of completing the tasks listed above; and in MSP II, the student learns the computerized method of completing the tasks listed above. The student learns the computerized tasks by completing appropriate office management, records management, and accounting simulations in MSP II. Prerequisites: RDG 100 or placement, BSS 153 (or co-requisite). Fall.

MAS 203 MEDICAL OFFICE PROCEDURES II (MSP II)
This is the first semester of a comprehensive two-semester course sequence designed to provide the student with the skill, knowledge, and attitude necessary to manage a medical office. These tasks include interacting with patients, using the telephone, scheduling appointments, processing information, managing medical reports, word processing medical correspondence, completing accounting transactions, understanding insurance, billing patients, and understanding medical ethics and confidentiality.

MSP II is the second half of a two-semester course requirement for MOC and MAS students. In MSP II the student learns the computerized method of completing the tasks listed above. The student learns the computerized tasks by completing appropriate office management, records management, and accounting simulations. Prerequisites: MAS101, BSS153. Spring.

MAS 102 MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY
This course is designed to provide students with a clear understanding of medical vocabulary. A workbook-text format is used to develop word-building activities, which guide the student through exercises that teach and reinforce medical terminology. Numerous and varied activities challenge the student to understand and remember the
significant concepts of medical word building. Audiocassettes provide reinforcement of pronunciation, definition of medical words, and spelling practice.
Prerequisite: RDG100 or placement. Fall.

**BSS 236 WORD I**
Students are introduced to the concepts of Microsoft Word. Topics include the basic skills; paragraph formatting, margins, and tabs; moving, copying, and revising text; printing and page formatting; tables and columns; advanced topics; and preparation for the MOUS certification.
Prerequisite: BSS153. Fall and Spring.

**MAS 310 EXTERNSHIP II**
A continuation of MAS210 involving 16 hours a week for 10 weeks. Application of all coursework in the Medical Assisting Degree Program will be performed.
Prerequisites: Completion of first three semesters of medical Assisting Degree program and MAS210. Spring.

**PER 126 FITNESS AND WELLNESS**
An introduction to physical fitness and wellness designed to acquaint the student with basic knowledge, understanding, and value of physical activity as it relates to optimal healthful living. Includes fitness evaluation and wellness assessment with pretest of cardiovascular efficiency, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, skills, body composition, diet, and weight control.
Prerequisites: MAT 100 and RDG 100, or placement. Fall and spring.

**PSY 105 INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY**
Students are introduced to the basic concepts and methods of psychology. Course content surveys the brain and nervous system, scientific methods, learning and memory, sensation and perception, development, adjustment, social behavior, personality, individual differences, abnormal behavior and treatment.
Prerequisites: RDG 100 and ENG 100, or placement. Fall and spring.
TECHNICAL STANDARDS

Technical Standards represents the essential non-academic requirements of the Medical Assisting Program that all students must master to successfully participate in the program and to become employable. All students are expected to:

1. Comprehend a textbook at the 11th grade reading level.
2. Communicate and assimilate information either in spoken, printed, signed, or computer voice format.
3. Gather, analyze, and draw conclusions from data.
4. Be able to type 30 words per minute for three minutes with three or fewer errors using the touch method of typing.
5. Write at a college level as evidenced by completion of ENG 100 or placement into ENG 101.
6. Distinguish shapes and colors under a microscope.
7. Read typewritten text and patient data from a computer screen, with or without corrective devices.
8. Discriminate color in order to identify reagents and other materials such as laboratory media, stained preparations, and the physical properties of various body fluids.
9. Possess the manual dexterity as required in such tasks as: performing phlebotomy; operating blood analyzers and laboratory information systems; handling small containers of potentially biohazardous specimens (one inch by one inch); utilizing sample measuring devices, such as pipettes; giving injections and being able to adequately focus and manipulate a microscope; utilize the small muscle dexterity necessary to do such tasks as gloving, gowning, and operating controls on machinery.
10. Traverse the hospital and laboratory corridors, passageways, and doorways (minimum width, three feet).
11. Communicate with patients and staff in the English language.
12. Maintain cleanliness and personal grooming consistent with close personal contact.
13. Possess hearing with or without corrective devices to be able to transcribe medical dictation from recorded media.
14. Comprehend and respond to the spoken word of all age-specific groups.
15. Function without causing harm to self or others if under the influence of prescription or over-the-counter medications.
16. Function without causing harm to others. This would include situations that may result from chronic mental or physical conditions.
17. React quickly, both mentally and physically.
18. Work as a member of a team.
19. Remain calm, rational, decisive, and in control at all times, especially during emergency situations.
20. Identify behaviors that would endanger a person's safety and intervene quickly in a crisis situation with an appropriate solution.
21. Exhibit social skills appropriate to professional interactions.
22. Respond to distress sounds, visual distress cues, emergency alarms, and vital sign assessment equipment.

The technical standards can be met with or without accommodations. The College complies with the requirements and spirit of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Therefore, to the extent practicable, the College will endeavor to make a reasonable academic adjustment for an applicant with a disability who is otherwise qualified.
The following is an excerpt from an article written by Donald A. Balasa, JD, MBA, executive director and staff legal counsel for the AAMA. He also serves as staff liaison for AAMA strategy teams for public policy, research and development, marketing, and for the Ad Hoc Committee on Legality of Clinical Procedures. This article explains other opportunities for Medical Assistants.

**Growing demand for MSHPs expands opportunities for the medical assisting profession**

What is a multiskilled health practitioner?

The advisory panel of the National Multiskilled Health Practitioner Clearinghouse (NMHPC) has defined multiskilled health practitioners (MSHPs) as follows:

persons cross trained to provide more than one function, often in more than one discipline. These combined functions can be found in a broad spectrum of health-related jobs, ranging in complexity from the nonprofessional to the professional level, including both clinical and management functions. The additional functions (skills) added to the original health care worker’s job may be of a higher, lower, or parallel level.

(According to this advisory panel, the terms *multiskilled, multicompetent,* and *cross trained* can be used interchangeably.)

Because of the general nature of the NMHPC’s definition, many allied health professionals who have received some sort of cross training and have functioned in nontraditional ways could be classified as MSHPs. Indeed, educational institutions and employers have experimented with a myriad of skill combinations and roles for MSHPs. As the above definition indicates, the competencies of an MSHP can be within one allied health discipline (intradisciplinary), or can encompass more than one discipline (interdisciplinary). Multi-skilled health practitioners have been utilized in many different health care delivery settings, both in-patient and ambulatory.

**What economic forces are creating the MSHP ground swell?**

**Efforts to contain the costs of health care**

Many facets of health system reform are being brought about by economic forces. As managed care entities continue to capture a larger share of the health care market, the power of providers to increase fees is increasingly blunted by the attempts of large-scale purchasers to keep prices low. More limited federal and state government reimbursement for health care under the Medicare and Medicaid programs are also limiting total revenue to providers. And, for better or worse, third-party payers are more emboldened to deny coverage for procedures which they are deeming nonessential. These are only the major factors putting cost pressures on health care providers, who, of course, are the primary employers of allied health personnel. In an effort to economize, providers are seeking to reduce personnel costs by replacing single-competency employees with employees who possess many competencies. This
strategy has proven to be so successful for some providers and has received so much coverage in the professional literature that many other employers are rushing to either find capable MSHPs or encourage existing staff to acquire additional competencies.

The increasing size of health care providers

In an attempt to achieve economies of scale and protect themselves against the seemingly relentless forces eroding their revenues, health care providers are banding together at an unprecedented rate. Not only are physicians horizontally integrating by forming larger group practices, often with more than one delivery site, but hospitals and other entities are purchasing physician practices and creating far-reaching vertically integrated networks. Providers are hoping that the increased economic power derived from consolidation can serve as a countervailing force to the united strength of purchasing groups.

As the health care provider sector becomes progressively more integrated and the number of personnel at each delivery site increases, the importance of employing appropriately skilled allied health personnel is magnified. Suboptimal staffing configurations may not be as obvious in smaller delivery settings; the effects of inefficiencies and redundancies become more apparent as the size of the operation and the number of personnel grow. Thus, the integration of the health care provider system has become another significant factor leading to the increasing realization of the value of multi-skilled health practitioners.

Although the judicious use of multi-skilled health practitioners (MSHPs) can create cost savings for health care providers and efficiency gains for society as a whole, such positive effects can be more than offset by the detrimental effects of employing MSHPs who do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide an acceptable quality of care.

Certified Medical Assistants (CMAs) who have graduated from medical assisting programs accredited by the Commission on the Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP, formerly CAHEA) have the necessary scope and depth of knowledge and skill to function as MSHPs.

Medical assistants have been functioning as multi-skilled health practitioners since the profession came into being. Indeed, the medical assisting profession was created in order to provide a versatile allied health professional who is competent in both administrative and clinical procedures, especially those needed in an ambulatory delivery setting such as a physician’s office or a clinic.

The need for the medical assisting profession was so apparent that the American Medical Association, in conjunction with the American Association of Medical Assistants, started accrediting post-secondary medical assisting programs in 1969. (The United States Office of Education subsequently recognized the AMA/AAMA as an official accrediting agency for medical assisting programs in public and private
Another milestone in the history of the medical assisting profession was the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare’s recognition of medical assisting as an allied health profession whose educational concerns were eligible for funding by the Bureau of Health Manpower. The Certification Examination leading to the Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) credential has become a benchmark for evaluating knowledge in all areas of medical assisting, and is one of only three allied health certification examinations utilizing the prestigious National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) as test consultant.

There is no question that the medical assisting profession and the American Association of Medical Assistants have a distinguished origin and history. With such an illustrious background, it is not surprising that the future prospects of medical assisting are rapidly becoming brighter than ever before. As the American health care delivery system has evolved, the skills and knowledge that continue to be indispensable to a properly educated and credentialed medical assistant are now the ideal prerequisites - both in scope and depth - for functioning as a multi-skilled health practitioner. Because of the unique capabilities of professional medical assistants, health care providers and shapers of health care manpower policy need look no further than Certified Medical Assistants when searching for allied health personnel who possess the optimal scope and depth of skill and knowledge to function as an MSHP.