



MEDICAL/CLINICAL ASSISTANT

CIP Code 51.0801

This document is a Program of Study for Medical/Clinical Assistant programs at the secondary level. This program of study is considered a framework, not a curriculum. From this framework educators may use this as a tool to provide structure for developing learning modules, unit plans, or daily lesson plans that meet the tasks or standards within the program of study. This program of study is based on research, experience, and many resources. The goal is to train a workforce that is skilled, knowledgeable, and able to meet the needs of the industry today and well into the future.

Medical assistants perform administrative and clinical tasks to keep the offices of physicians, podiatrists, chiropractors, and other health practitioners running smoothly. They 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 the location and size of the practice and the practitioner's specialty. In small practices, medical assistants usually do many different kinds of tasks, 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 who perform administrative tasks have many duties. They update and file patients' medical records, fill out insurance forms, and arrange for hospital admissions and laboratory services. They also perform tasks less specific to medical settings, such as answering telephones, greeting patients, handling correspondence, scheduling appointments, and handling billing and bookkeeping.

For clinical medical assistants, duties vary according to what is allowed by State law. Some common tasks include taking medical histories and recording vital signs, explaining treatment procedures to patients, preparing patients for examinations, and assisting physicians during examinations. Medical assistants collect and prepare laboratory specimens and sometimes perform basic laboratory tests on the premises, dispose of contaminated supplies, and sterilize medical instruments. They might instruct patients about medications 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 also may arrange examining room instruments and equipment, purchase and maintain supplies and equipment, and keep waiting and examining rooms neat and clean. Ophthalmic medical assistants, optometric assistants, and podiatric medical assistants are examples of specialized assistants who have additional duties. Ophthalmic medical assistants help ophthalmologists provide eye care. They conduct diagnostic tests, measure and record vision, and test eye muscle function. They also show patients how to insert, remove, and care for contact lenses, and they apply eye dressings. Under the direction of the physician, ophthalmic medical assistants may administer eye medications. They also maintain optical and surgical instruments and may assist the ophthalmologist in surgery. Optometric assistants also help provide eye care, working with optometrists. They provide chair-side assistance, instruct patients about contact lens use and care, conduct preliminary tests on patients, and otherwise provide

assistance while working directly with an optometrist. Podiatric medical assistants make castings of feet, expose and develop x-rays, and assist podiatrists in surgery.

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 40-hour week. However, many medical assistants work part time, evenings, or weekends. Some medical assistants are trained on the job, but many complete 1-year or 2-year programs.

Postsecondary medical assisting programs are offered in vocational-technical high schools, postsecondary vocational schools, and community and junior colleges. Programs usually last either 1 year and result in a certificate or diploma, or 2 years and result 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, the administration of medications, and first aid. They study office practices, patient relations, medical law, and ethics. There are various organizations that accredit medical assisting programs. Accredited programs often include an internship that provides practical experience in physicians' offices, hospitals, or other health care facilities.

Formal training in medical assisting, while generally preferred, is not always required. Some medical assistants are trained on the job, although this practice is less common than in the past. Applicants usually need a high school diploma or the equivalent. Recommended high school courses include mathematics, health, biology, typing, bookkeeping, computers, and office skills. Volunteer experience in the health care field also is helpful. Medical assistants who are trained on the job usually spend their first few months attending training sessions and working closely with more experienced workers. Employers prefer to hire experienced workers or those who are certified. Although not required, certification indicates that a medical assistant meets certain standards of competence.

Medical assistants deal with the public; therefore, they must be neat and well groomed and have a courteous, pleasant manner and they 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.

Assumptions of This Program of Study

High-quality programs should meet the following standards:

- Promote **positive working relationships**
- Implement a **curriculum** that fosters all areas of skill development – cognitive, emotional, language, physical, and social
- Use developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and **effective teaching approaches**
- Provide **ongoing assessments** of student progress
- Employ and support qualified **teaching staff**
- Establish and maintain collaborative relationships **with families**
- Establish and maintain relationships and use resources of the **community**
- Provide a safe and healthy learning **environment**

- Implement strong program organization and supervision policies that result in **high-quality teaching and learning**
- Integrate academic skills and aptitudes necessary for gainful employment and promoting a foundation of **lifelong learning**

Academic Rigor

Research shows that career success requires the same level of college-prep courses as postsecondary success requires. The Department of Education's focus is to ensure that every student graduates prepared for college and a career. In order to be successful in this program of study, students should follow the academic sequence as determined by Pennsylvania's high school reform efforts.

Resources Used for This Program of Study

- MAVCC (Multistate Academic Vocational Curriculum Consortium)
<http://www.mavcc.org/>
- NOCTI (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute <http://www.nocti.org/>)
- O*NET <http://online.onetcenter.org/>
- Pennsylvania Approved Certifications for Industry-Recognized Certifications for Career and Technical Education Programs
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/instructional_resources/7392/industry-recognized_certifications_for_career_and_technical_education_programs/507887
- Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry High Priority Occupations
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/high_priority_occupations/12910
- VTECS (A Consortium of Innovative Career and Workforce Development Resources)
<http://www.vtecs.org/>

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Pennsylvania CIP

An instructional program that prepares individuals to assist physicians by performing functions related to both administrative and clinical duties of a medical office. Administrative components of instruction include telephone technique, insurance, accounts, reports, medical records, computerized fiscal management, medical transcription and word processing. The clinical aspects of the program provide instruction in examination room techniques, aseptic practices, infection control, care of equipment and supplies, CPR and first aid, laboratory orientation and the use of biomedical equipment. The curriculum includes planned courses in anatomy and physiology, universal precautions and OSHA regulations, medical terminology, medical law and ethics, psychology, communications, introduction to pharmacology, medical assisting skills and clinical practice.

Integrate Academic Career Education and Work Standards for Student Success

As students participate in career exploration activities and rigorous studies from elementary grades through graduation, they learn to appreciate the relationship between their classroom learning and the skills needed within the workplace. The academic and workplace skills within the Academic Standards for Career Education and Work are expected to be addressed within classrooms and achieved by all students throughout Pennsylvania. No student should leave secondary education without a solid foundation in these Standards.

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_board_of_education/8830/state_academic_standards/529102

CEW Standards Tool Kit for teachers to implement CEW Standards

www.pacareerstandards.com

Nurse Aide Training Performance Checklist

http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/nurse_aide_training_program/7685/instructor%27s_corner/507873

Pennsylvania Approved Certifications

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/instructional_resources/7392/industry-recognized_certifications_for_career_and_technical_education_programs/507887

Nurse Aide Training Performance Checklist

http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/nurse_aide_training_program/7685/instructor%27s_corner/507873

The Programs of Study Documents

- Crosswalk Template for Task Alignment (excel) – Medical/Clinical Assistant – Instructions: Indicate the number code(s) of your school’s program competency or competencies aligned to each program of study competency.
- Crosswalk Template for Task Alignment (pdf) – Medical/Clinical Assistant – Instructions: Indicate the number code(s) of your school’s program competency or competencies aligned to each program of study competency.
- Scope and Sequence Template (word) – Enter secondary technical Program of Study courses. Postsecondary courses will be determined when the Statewide Articulation Agreement for this Program of Study is complete.
- Scope and Sequence Template (pdf) – Enter secondary technical Program of Study courses. Postsecondary courses will be determined when the Statewide Articulation Agreement for this Program of Study is complete.
- PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content Alignment Task List (excel) – Medical/Clinical Assistant – Crosswalk of PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL), Math, and Science aligned to Program of Study Secondary Competency List. (coming soon)

- PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content Alignment Task List (pdf) – Medical/Clinical Assistant – Crosswalk of PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL), Math, and Science aligned to Program of Study Secondary Competency List. (coming soon)

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