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Medical Assistant Programs in High Demand by [Amy Russell](#)

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Medical assisting is one health occupation in high demand, and according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics it is one career that has experienced the fastest growth in the country. In the next four years, job opportunities for medical assistants will grow exponentially. Medical assistants are valuable to doctor's offices, hospitals and other health care facilities. They receive training in medical assistant programs that include clinical and administrative duties. These attributes make medical assistants an important member to any health care location.

Medical assistant programs require 24 months of study and hands-on application. Clinical courses cover a wide variety of topics necessary for working at any health care facility. You will study phlebotomy, which is the act of drawing blood, or venipuncture, from a patient for lab tests. Also, you learn to take vital signs such as measuring height, weight, temperature, blood pressure, and pulse rate. Other courses include assisting with physical examinations, minor office surgeries, collecting and testing specimens, conducting electrocardiograms, administering oral medications and interviewing and recording patient concerns prior to the doctor's examination. Medical assistants also receive training for explaining procedures to patients and answering patient questions in a professional manner. Sometimes doctors dictate prescriptions to medical assistants prior to authorization and giving it to the patient; therefore, you will learn appropriate medical terminology for writing a prescription. Additionally, courses in radiography give you a background in x-ray procedures, which is an advantage since many health care facilities have in-house radiography services.

After completing courses in the classroom setting, your skills are tested in a hands-on environment when you apply what you learned from classroom instruction. Your instructor guides your use of medical simulation mannequins or virtual patients so you become a highly proficient medical assistant in the area of patient care. It is better to make mistakes and correct errors on virtual patients rather than real ones.

In addition to learning how to care for patients, administrative courses are an integral part of the 24 month study of medical assistant programs. You will master clerical duties such as medical coding for procedures, billing and filing insurance claims. Other important clerical skills include collecting documentation for medical records, scheduling appointments in the office, a hospital or out-patient care. All of these office skills combined with clinical knowledge, make you a valuable member in any health care facility.

Upon completion of medical assistant programs, students earn an Associate in Science degree in Medical Assisting. Yet, getting a certification with your degree is the next logical step. Consider this as a possibility: be able to advance rapidly in the field of medical assisting. Have a professional advantage over other medical assistants with greater credibility and better job security. A Certified Medical Assistant credential is recognized nationwide and appreciated by many health care facilities. In addition to becoming a CMA, consider a certification in EKG and phlebotomy or a basic x-ray operator license. All of these certifications only add to your marketability as a CMA and increase your employment opportunities.

Working as a medical assistant is an exciting career, and medical assistant programs prepare you for success. The time required for program completion is minimal compared to the knowledge and benefits you gain. It is career in high demand with avenues for quick advancement and job security. Consider if this field is right for you.

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Amy Russell is an independent college counselor who enjoys helping others achieve their education goals. Recently, she has seen many students interested on a [training in medical assistant programs](#) to pursue a healthcare profession. Being a South Florida local, she tends to refer students in the area looking for schools nearby to a <http://www.cbt.edu/academics/school-of-allied-health-a-science>.

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