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Where/how to get training

Most employers prefer to hire graduates of formal programs in medical assisting. Such programs are offered in vocational-technical high schools, community colleges and in colleges and universities. Post-secondary programs usually last either one year, resulting in a certificate or diploma, or two years, resulting in an associate degree. Johnston Community College's program is designed so that a student can graduate in three semesters with a diploma, or graduate in five semesters with an Associate in Applied Science Degree. Moderate length on-the-job training (less than 1 year) is usually required. This is an apprenticeship occupation. Apprenticeship programs, which usually take three to four years to complete, require at least 144 hours of instruction per year. Total training time in hours for Medical Assistants is 4000 hours.

Scholarship Information

Scholarships at Johnston Community College are provided by a number of organizations and individuals. The College also cooperates with a number of agencies and organizations for other types of assistance such as the Federal Pell Grant, Workforce Investment Act and Vocational Rehabilitation Financial Assistance. For more information on scholarships, contact the College's Office of Financial Aid at 919-209-2028.

Recommended High School Classes

- Political Science
- Social Science
- Biology
- Physical Science
- Math

Future job opportunities

The projected rate of growth for this occupation in North Carolina is above average (more than 2.1 percent). There are currently 4012 people employed in this occupation in North Carolina. Job prospects should be best for medical assistants with formal training and experience. Medical assisting is expected to be one of the 10 fastest growing occupations through the year 2008.

What you wear



Medical assistants work in well-lighted, clean environments. They constantly interact with other people. Depending on the job and work area, you may wear uniforms.



For more information on federal financial aid programs, call (800) 4-FEDAID

SCHOOL to career

focus on jobs in Medical Assisting



Medical Assisting is in the cluster of Health Care Support Occupations, which includes jobs or careers concerned with providing health services to assist medical practitioners and technicians.

The duties of a medical assistant vary from office to office, depending on office location, size and specialty. Assistants who specialize have additional duties. For example, Podiatric medical assistants make castings of feet, expose and develop x-rays, and assist podiatrists in surgery.



Because medical assistants deal with the public, they must be neat, well groomed, and have a courteous, pleasant manner. Medical assistants must be able to put patients at ease and explain physicians' instructions.

Medical Assistants perform various duties under the direction of a physician in examination and treatment of patients. They prepare treatment rooms, inventory supplies and instruments, and set up patients for attention of physician. They also hand instruments and materials to the physician as directed. In addition, they schedule appointments, keep medical records, and perform secretarial duties.



Medical assistants perform routine administrative and clinical tasks to keep the offices and clinics of physicians, podiatrists, chiropractors, and optometrists running smoothly.



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 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 prepare laboratory specimens and/or perform basic laboratory tests, dispose of contaminated supplies, and sterilize medical instruments.

Profile

Rhonda Lee, CMA
Smithfield, NC



Rhonda Lee's goal has always been to work in an area of health care. During high school she took Health Occupation Classes and after high school graduation she attended Johnston Community College for college transfer courses.

Lee graduated from Pitt Community College in Greenville, NC with an Associate Degree in Medical Assisting and then passed the National Certification Exam to become a Certified Medical Assistant. With her degree, Lee obtained skills in administrative, clinical, and laboratory duties for a health care setting.

After graduation, Lee accepted a position as a CMA in a primary care facility where she performed administrative, clinical, and laboratory duties. Lee also started a new position in the facility as a clinical Drug Research Coordinator, in which she conducted clinical drug research on patients. Lee then worked for a pharmaceutical company, where she was a Clinical Research Associate and traveled worldwide to ensure clinical drug studies on patients were being conducted according to protocol.

Lee was presented with the opportunity to come to Johnston Community College to work in August 2001 as the Program Director and Instructor for the Medical Assisting Program. Lee said, "I felt it was a wonderful opportunity to develop this program at Johnston Community College because of community need. I feel that Johnston Community College is a professional organization that cares about the faculty and the students." She describes her position as the Program Director and Instructor as a great job with the opportunity to meet new people and learn a lot about the community of Johnston County.

Skills needed

People, communication, interpersonal, detail oriented and willingness to help others.



Want to know more?

Johnston
Community
College

919-934-3051

www.johnston.cc.nc.us

American
Association
of Medical
Assistants

1-800-228-2262

www.aama-ntl.org

Jobs in the Field

Wages usually begin at about half the journeyman rate, but never below the minimum wage, and rise as the apprentice progresses through the program.

Employment for this occupation is primarily in the following industries:

- Offices & Clinics of Medical Doctors
- Offices of Other Health Practitioners
- Hospitals

The average earnings for an experienced worker is \$20,384

The average earnings for an entry level worker is \$17,077

- Dental Assistants
- Home Health Aides
- Insurance Clerk
- Medical Assistant
- Medical Office Manager
- Medical Transcriber
- Nursing Aides, Orderlies, Attendants
- Occupational Therapy Assistants
- Physical and Corrective Therapy Assistants
- Psychiatric Aides

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