Chapter 3
The Medical Assisting Profession
Lesson 3.1

The Medical Assisting Profession

1. Define, spell, and pronounce the terms listed in the vocabulary.
2. Briefly discuss the history of medical assisting as a profession.
3. Discuss the versatility of a career in medical assisting.
4. Differentiate between administrative and clinical medical assisting duties and recognize the importance of becoming knowledgeable about the general responsibilities of the medical assistant.
5. Comprehend the current employment outlook for the medical assistant.
6. Give the reasons that hiring an individual with no formal training often is more expensive than hiring a professional medical assistant.
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7. Identify several considerations to keep in mind, other than financial compensation, when choosing a position as a medical assistant.

8. Discuss the aspects of the medical assistant’s performance on a successful externship.

9. List three unacceptable behaviors on the externship site.

10. Explain why continuing education is so important to the medical assistant.

11. Understand medical assistant credentialing requirements, the importance of credentialing, and the process of obtaining credentials.

12. Discuss the difference between a CMA and a RMA.
Caregivers

- Patient needs come first
  - Assist patient in every possible way
- Caregiving is key to medical assisting
The History of Medical Assisting

- Administrative and clinical skills training began in 1940s
- Very respected healthcare field
- Many training opportunities
The Scope of Practice

- Duties vary from office to office, within office
- Practice within many physicians’ offices
- Perform clinical and administrative duties
Administrative Duties

- Greet patients
- Basic registration information
- Bookkeeping and filing
- Answering phones and handling correspondence
- Scheduling appointments
Clinical Duties

- Prepare patients and equipment for exams
- Perform basic testing procedures
- Collect and prepare laboratory specimens
- Do inventory and order supplies
- Perform x-rays
- Take patient histories
A Career in Medical Assisting

- Flexible, adaptable
- Valuable skills
- Increased employment opportunities
- Recent high school graduates and many nontraditional students
Outlook for the Profession

- 31% increase over next decade
- Increasing group practices and clinics
- Support personnel needed
- Low job turnover
Hiring Untrained Individuals

- Costly errors are made
- More supervision is required
  - Less time for physicians to perform their duties
Choosing a Position

Consider:

- Drive time
- Holidays and sick days
- Vacation days
- Facilities
- Work environment
Professional Appearance

- Good health
- Good grooming
  - No facial or tongue piercings
- Suitable dress
Classroom Training

- Programs range from 7 months to 2 years in duration
- Modules aimed to provide training in clinical, administrative, and theoretical areas
- Laboratory classrooms provide hands-on experience
The Successful Externship

- Complete tasks independently
- Conversations with your supervisor
- Be a willing learner
- Be open to constructive criticism
Unacceptable Behaviors During Externship

NEVER:

- Argue with the staff members
- Form a romantic relationship with patients/staff
- Use drug samples at the office
Continuing Education

- Keep up with rapid field changes
- Continued education classes
  - Take courses applying to your job
- Required to maintain certification
Credential Requirements

- Professional organization membership
- Hours of clinical experience
- Experience in a particular field
- Graduation from certain programs
Certification Exams for Medical Assistants

- COLT
- RPT
- CMAS
- All exams computerized
The Difference Between CMAs and RMAs

- Examination consult organizations
- Cost
  - Graduates
  - Nongraduates