

EFFECTIVE JULY 2027



CMA (AAMA)®

SETS THE BAR FOR EXCELLENCE IN MEDICAL ASSISTING

Content Outline

For the CMA (AAMA)® Certification Exam

A publication of the Certifying Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants®



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS®



The Certification Program of the Certifying Board of the American Association of Medical Assistants is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) as a result of demonstrating compliance with the NCCA Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs. The NCCA is the accrediting body of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), formerly called the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NOCA). The NCCA Standards were created to ensure that certification programs adhere to modern standards of practice for the certification industry.

Number and Percent of Questions by Category

Section	Category	Number/Percent
I	Clinical	
A.	Clinical Workflow: Patient Intake and Discharge	
B.	Safety and Infection Control	
C.	Procedures/Examinations	
D.	Pharmacology	
	Number of Questions	117
	Percent of Questions	65%
II	General	
E.	Legal and Ethical Issues	
F.	Communication	
	Number of Questions	36
	Percent of Questions	20%
III	Administrative	
G.	Insurance Basics	
H.	Scheduling Appointments and Health Information Management	
	Number of Questions	27
	Percent of Questions	15%
	Total Number	180*
	Total Percent	100%

*The exam consists of 200 multiple-choice questions. Of these, 180 questions will be scored, and 20 will be pretested.



Content Outline

I. Clinical

A. Clinical Workflow: Patient Intake and Discharge

1. Vital Signs

- a. Blood pressure principles and technique
- b. Pulse points and techniques
 - (1) Pulse locations
 - (2) Rate and rhythm
- c. Height/Weight/Body mass index (BMI)
- d. Body temperature techniques and equipment
- e. Pulse oximetry
- f. Respiration rate and pattern
- g. Pain scale
- h. Pediatric measurements/Growth chart (e.g., head circumference, length, weight)
- i. Age-specific normal and abnormal vital signs

2. Medical Terminology

- a. Word parts
- b. Diagnostic procedures
- c. Surgical procedures
- d. Definitions

3. Interviewing Techniques

- a. Concise and accurate reporting of relevant information
- b. Open-ended/Exploratory questions vs. closed/direct questions
- c. Interpretive services

4. Documentation of Care

- a. Chief complaint
- b. Subjective data
- c. Objective data
- d. Review of systems
- e. Past medical/surgical history
- f. Reconciliation of medications and/or allergies
- g. Family history
- h. Social and occupational history
- i. Treatment plan
- j. Addendums/Corrections

5. Patient Screenings

- a. Prevention and screening for cancer
- b. Prevention and screening for sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- c. Substance use screening
- d. Osteoporosis screening
- e. Awareness, screening, and detection of domestic violence and exploitation
- f. Screening for anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation

6. Processing Provider Orders

- a. Instructions on diabetes management
- b. Instructions on use of mobility equipment and assistive devices
- c. Pre-/Post-procedure/treatment instructions
- d. Patient-administered treatments and medications
- e. Home testing and monitoring (e.g., anticoagulation, blood pressure, blood sugar)

- f. Alternative medicine (e.g., acupuncture, massage)
- g. Nutrition education
 - (1) Function of, and barriers to, basic nutritional elements
 - (a) Carbohydrates
 - (b) Fats
 - (c) Proteins and amino acids
 - (d) Minerals and electrolytes
 - (e) Vitamins
 - (f) Fiber
 - (g) Water
 - (2) Function of dietary supplements and herbs
 - (3) Special dietary needs
 - (a) Weight management
 - (b) Diabetes
 - (c) Cardiovascular disease/Hypertension
 - (d) Cancer
 - (e) Food intolerance, sensitivity, and allergies
 - (f) Kidney disease
 - (4) Food label interpretation
 - (5) Eating disorders

B. Safety and Infection Control

1. Infectious Agents

- a. Bacteria
- b. Viruses
- c. Protozoa/Parasites
- d. Fungi/Yeast

2. Infection Cycle

- a. Body's natural barriers
- b. Modes of infection transmission (i.e., direct vs. indirect)
- c. Infection cycle interruption

3. Standard/Universal Precautions and Exposure Control

- a. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and bloodborne pathogens
- b. Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- c. Hand hygiene
- d. Post-exposure protocol/Eyewash station
- e. Sharps/Needle safety

4. Medical Asepsis

- a. Sanitization
- b. Disinfection
- c. Cleaning (clinical/medical vs. nonclinical areas)

5. Biohazard Disposal/Regulated Waste

- a. Disposal of medical waste (i.e., hazardous and nonhazardous)
- b. Biohazard cleanup

6. Safety Resources

- a. Safety signs, symbols, labels
- b. Safety data sheets (SDSs)/Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS)

7. Safety and Emergency Procedures

- a. Workplace safety/emergency preparedness/evacuation
- b. Crash cart supplies/equipment
- c. Fire prevention/regulations/extinguishers

8. Emergency Management, Identification, and Response/Basic First Aid

- a. Bleeding control
- b. Burns
- c. Cardiac/Respiratory arrest
- d. Foreign body obstruction
- e. Diabetic ketoacidosis

- f. Insulin shock
- g. Bone fractures
- h. Poisoning
- i. Seizures
- j. Shock
- k. Cerebrovascular accident (CVA)
- l. Syncope
- m. Lacerations/Avulsions/Punctures/Abrasions
- n. Cold/Heat exposure
- o. Joint dislocations/Sprains/Strains
- p. Asthmatic attack
- q. Hyperventilation
- r. Animal/Insect bite
- s. Head trauma/traumatic brain injury
- t. Chemical exposure

9. Body Mechanics/Ergonomics

10. Risk Management, Quality Assurance, and Safety Procedures

- a. Reporting unsafe or unlawful activities and behaviors
- b. Potential conflicts of interest (e.g., family members, vendor gifts)
- c. Incident reporting/Patient safety variance reporting

C. Procedures/Examinations

1. Prepare Patients for Examinations, Procedures, and Treatments

- a. Examination methods
 - (1) Auscultation
 - (2) Inspection
 - (3) Mensuration
 - (4) Palpation
 - (5) Percussion

- b. Body positioning
 - (1) Dorsal recumbent
 - (2) Fowler's and semi-Fowler's
 - (3) Knee-chest
 - (4) Lithotomy
 - (5) Prone
 - (6) Sims/left lateral
 - (7) Supine
- c. Pediatric
- d. Obstetric/Gynecologic

2. Techniques, Supplies, Equipment, and Patient Instruction

- a. Eye irrigation and instillation
- b. Ear irrigation and instillation
- c. Suture/staple
- d. Cast/splint/sling

3. Minor Office Surgical Procedures

- a. Surgical asepsis
- b. Surgical scrub/antimicrobial
- c. Sterile tray prep/field boundaries
- d. Antiseptic skin prep

4. Wound Care

- a. Chronic/Nonhealing
- b. Bandaging/dressing
- c. Post-op incision

5. Instruments

- a. Classification, identification, and use
- b. Sterilization techniques
 - (1) Cleaning items
 - (2) Wrapping/pouching items with label and date
 - (3) Autoclave/chemical sterilization
 - (4) Sterilization indicators/quality control measures

6. Anatomy and Physiology

- a. Human growth and development patterns/ milestones across the lifespan
- b. Structural units (e.g., cell, tissue, organ)
- c. Anatomical divisions and body cavities
- d. Anatomical positions and directions
- e. Body planes and quadrants
- f. Body systems, **NORMAL** structure and function
 - (1) Integumentary
 - (2) Musculoskeletal
 - (3) Nervous
 - (4) Cardiovascular, hematopoietic, and lymphatic
 - (5) Respiratory
 - (6) Digestive
 - (7) Urinary
 - (8) Reproductive
 - (9) Endocrine
 - (10) Sensory
- g. Body systems, recognition and etiology of **ABNORMAL** structure and function
 - (1) Integumentary
 - (2) Musculoskeletal
 - (3) Nervous
 - (4) Cardiovascular, hematopoietic, and lymphatic
 - (5) Respiratory
 - (6) Digestive
 - (7) Urinary
 - (8) Reproductive
 - (9) Endocrine
 - (10) Sensory

7. Specimen Collection Techniques

- a. Methods of collection
 - (1) Blood
 - (a) Venipuncture techniques
 - (b) Equipment/Needles
 - (c) Tube additives/Order of draw
 - (d) Specimen preparation (serum/plasma/ whole blood)

- (e) Capillary/dermal puncture

- (2) Urine
 - (a) Random
 - (b) Clean catch midstream
 - (c) Timed (e.g., 24-hour) collection
 - (d) Catheterization
 - (e) Pediatric urine collection
 - (f) Drug screening
- (3) Fecal and fecal occult specimen
- (4) Sputum specimen
- (5) Swabs
 - (a) Buccal/Oral
 - (b) Throat
 - (c) Wound
 - (d) Nasal/Nasopharyngeal
 - (e) Genitourinary

8. Prepare, Process, and Examine Specimens

- a. Specimen labeling
- b. Sources of specimen contamination
- c. Specimen preservation
 - (1) Appropriate temperature
 - (2) Fixative
 - (3) Additives
- d. Centrifuge
- e. Microscopes and wet mount slides

9. Laboratory Quality Control, Quality Assurance, and Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA) Requirements

- a. Testing records and performance logs
- b. Equipment calibration and maintenance
- c. Quality control testing
- d. Temperature controls

10. Laboratory Panels and Selected Tests

- a. Urinalysis
 - (1) Physical

- (2) Chemical
- (3) Microscopic
- b. Hematology
 - (1) Hematocrit
 - (2) Hemoglobin
 - (3) Erythrocytic sedimentation rate (ESR)
 - (4) Red blood cell (RBC)
 - (5) White blood cell (WBC)
 - (6) White cell differential
 - (7) Platelet
 - (8) Coagulation testing (INR)
- c. Chemistry/Metabolic testing
 - (1) Glucose
 - (2) Kidney function
 - (3) Liver function
 - (4) Lipid profile
 - (5) Hemoglobin A₁C
 - (6) Electrolytes
 - (7) Thyroid function
- d. Specialized testing
 - (1) Mononucleosis
 - (2) Rapid Group A Streptococcus
 - (3) C-reactive protein (CRP)
 - (4) HCG (pregnancy test)
 - (5) *H. pylori*
 - (6) Influenza
 - (7) COVID-19
 - (8) Tuberculosis tests/Purified protein derivative (PPD) skin test
 - (9) Cardiovascular
 - (a) Electrocardiography
 - (i) Perform ECG/EKG
 - (ii) Recognize and eliminate artifacts
 - (iii) Recognize rhythms, arrhythmias
 - (10) Vision
 - (a) Color vision

- (b) Visual acuity
 - (i) Near vision
 - (ii) Distance vision
- (c) Visual fields
- (11) Audiometric/Hearing
 - (a) Pure tone audiometry
 - (b) Speech and word recognition
 - (c) Tympanometry
 - (d) Whisper
- (12) Allergy
 - (a) Scratch test
 - (b) Intradermal skin test
 - (c) Patch test
 - (d) Radioallergosorbent test (RAST)
- (13) Respiratory
 - (a) Pulmonary function tests (PFTs)
 - (b) Spirometry
 - (c) Peak flow rate
- e. Normal and abnormal laboratory and diagnostic test results

D. Pharmacology

1. Medications/Controlled Substances

- a. Classes of drugs/Indications for use
- b. Drug actions and desired effects
- c. Adverse reactions, side effects, allergic reactions, and black box warnings
- d. Contraindications
- e. Storage of drugs/Inventory control
- f. Generic and brand-name drugs
- g. Prescribing/e-Prescribing

2. Oral and Parenteral Medications (Preparation and Administration)

- a. Rights for medication administration
- b. Dosage of medication
 - (1) Metric conversion
 - (2) Units of measure
 - (3) Calculations of medication dosage

- c. Routes of administration, including safety precautions
 - (1) Intramuscular (e.g., Z-track)
 - (2) Subcutaneous
 - (3) Oral/Sublingual/Buccal
 - (4) Topical/Transdermal
 - (5) Inhalation
 - (6) Intradermal
 - (7) Vaginal/Rectal
- d. Injections
 - (1) Site selection
 - (2) Needle length and gauge
- e. Medication documentation
 - (1) Administration of medications
 - (2) Reporting of medication errors

- e. Security of electronic data and transmission of information (e.g., artificial intelligence (AI), cyber security, encryption, electronic health record [EHR] user tracking)

2. Protected Health Information (PHI)

- a. Authorization to release
 - (1) Drug and alcohol treatment records
 - (2) HIV-related information
 - (3) Mental health records
 - (4) Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)
 - (5) Continuity of care
- b. Authorization to rescind release
- c. Use and disposal of PHI

3. Consent

- a. Informed/Written
- b. Implied/Verbal
- c. Exceptions (e.g., mature or emancipated minor, dependent adult, guardians, power of attorney, emergency situations)

4. Areas of Law

- a. Professional Liability Torts
 - (1) Negligence
 - (2) Slander
 - (3) Libel
 - (4) Abandonment
 - (5) Assault
 - (6) Battery
- b. Current standard of care
- c. Legal terms and doctrines
 - (1) Subpoena/Subpoena duces tecum
 - (2) Deposition
 - (3) Respondeat superior
 - (4) Good Samaritan laws/acts
- d. Provider-patient agreements
 - (1) Legal obligations to the patient

3. Immunizations

- a. Childhood/Adult immunizations
- b. Recordkeeping for immunizations
- c. Vaccine Information Statement (VIS)
- d. Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)
- e. Vaccine storage

II. General

E. Legal and Ethical Issues

1. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

- a. Confidentiality/Patient privacy (verbal and written)
- b. Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH)
- c. Patients' right to inspect, amend, and restrict access to medical records
- d. Patients' Bill of Rights legislation/Patient Care Partnership policy statement

- (2) Termination of medical care
 - (a) Elements/Behaviors for withdrawal of care
 - (b) Patient notification/documentation

5. Mandatory Reporting/Public Health Statutes

- a. Communicable diseases
- b. Abuse, neglect, exploitation of child, elder, or partner
- c. Wounds of violence

6. Ethical Standards (Behaviors, Decisions, and Reporting)

7. Advance Directives

- a. Living will (e.g., Do Not Resuscitate [DNR])
- b. Medical durable power of attorney
- c. Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA)

F. Communication

1. Interpersonal Skills and Patient Relations

- a. Human behavior and mental health
- b. Defense mechanisms (e.g., recognition, adaptive responses)
- c. Recognize stereotypes, biases, and impartiality
- d. Adapt communication styles to meet diverse patient populations
 - (1) Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) compliance
 - (2) Death and dying/terminally ill patients
 - (3) Visually/Hearing-impaired patients and their interpreters
 - (4) Non-English speaking and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) patients
 - (5) Illiterate patients
 - (6) Intellectually challenged patients

- (7) Age-specific therapeutic/adaptive responses
 - (a) Pediatric and adolescent patients
 - (b) Geriatric patients

- (8) Diverse cultures

- e. Nonverbal communication (e.g., eye contact, facial expression, gestures, posture, touch)
- f. Conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques
- g. Service recovery and patient satisfaction
- h. Level of understanding (sender/receiver feedback loop)
- i. Barriers to communication (internal/external/environmental distractions)

2. Health Care Team Roles

- a. Plan of care and referral coordination
- b. Patient navigator/advocate/case manager/health coach
- c. Team approach to patient care management
- d. Medical specialties

3. Professional Telephone/Telehealth Etiquette and Techniques

- a. Message protocols
- b. Screening/Gathering data

4. Facility policies (e.g., cancellation and late arrival policies, required identification, payment, service/emotional support animals)

III. Administrative

G. Insurance Basics

1. Coding Basics

- a. Procedural coding (*Current Procedural Terminology [CPT]*)
 - (1) Bundling and unbundling

- (2) Modifiers
- (3) Upcoding and downcoding
- b. Diagnostic coding (i.e., *International Classification of Diseases, Clinical Modification [ICD-CM]*)
- c. Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS Level II)
- d. Medical necessity guidelines

2. Insurance Fraud and/or Abuse

3. Insurance Coverage for Patient Services

- a. Eligibility verification
- b. Claims filing and follow up (e.g., submission, explanation of benefits)
- c. Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN)

4. Insurance Types (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, Workers' Compensation, Military Plans)

5. Authorizations and Resources

- a. Precertification/Prior authorization
 - (1) Diagnostic and surgical procedures
 - (2) Medications and injections

6. Patient Account Financial Procedures

- a. Charges
- b. Payments/Adjustments
- c. Deductible
- d. Co-pay and coinsurance (e.g., cost-sharing)
- e. Financial considerations (e.g., sliding fee scale)

H. Scheduling Appointments and Health Information Management

1. Scheduling Appointments

- a. New patient/Established patient

- b. Routine/Urgent patient
- c. Coordinate facility, equipment, and personnel requirements
- d. Ancillary services
- e. Cancellations, missed appointments, and provider delay or unavailability

2. Medical Reception/Patient Registration

- a. Patient verification and demographics
- b. Identity theft protection precautions

3. Electronic Health Records

- a. Recognize/Identify/Organize medical reports (e.g., consultation reports, discharge summary)
- b. Medical record preparation/Pre-visit planning

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Candidates may choose to take the CMA (AAMA) Certification Practice Exam, available on the AAMA website. The practice exam provides an opportunity to become familiar with the question formats, navigation, and overall testing experience associated with the CMA (AAMA) Certification Exam.