

2020 CMA (AAMA)® Compensation and Benefits Report

The CMA (AAMA)

Employers are increasingly demanding that their medical assistants have a CMA (AAMA)® credential.¹ Every day the AAMA responds to more than 100 employer requests for CMA (AAMA) certification verification—for both current and potential employees.² Such demand is often due to the pressures of potential malpractice suits and the certification mandates placed on employers by managed care organizations.³

Additionally, the Medicaid Promoting Interoperability (PI) Program permits only credentialed medical assistants, such as CMAs (AAMA), and licensed health care professionals to enter medication, laboratory, and diagnostic imaging orders into the computerized provider order entry (CPOE) system for meaningful use calculation purposes.⁴ The CMA (AAMA) must have current status to use the credential, including for qualifying to enter orders for meaningful use for the Medicaid PI Program.

Medical assistants and medical assisting educators across the country enthusiastically participated in the 2020 Compensation and Benefits Survey conducted by the American Association of Medical Assistants® (AAMA). Nearly 8,000 medical assistants completed the survey.

The AAMA emailed an electronic questionnaire to more than 29,000 members and announced the survey via *AAMA e-Update* (99,000+ subscribers) and the AAMA Facebook page (nearly 49,000 followers). The majority of respondents (85%) were medical assistants, while 3% identified themselves as medical assisting educators. Approximately 3% of respondents identified themselves as medical practice managers, while about 2% identified as both medical assistants and medical assisting educators. Most of the participants had earned the CMA (AAMA) credential (95%) and were members of the AAMA (99%).

Statistical significance and terms used

The large number of participants ensures that the results have a high degree of statistical significance. The overall margin of error for the 7,755 responses is $\pm 1.1\%$ at the 95% confidence level. Margin of error describes the statistical significance of the sample as an estimate of the population. The margin of error should be treated only as an approximation, since margin of error calculations are based on pure random selection, which is not achievable in traditional survey settings where response is voluntary. The $\pm 1.1\%$ margin of error applies to overall statistics based on the total respondents to the survey; smaller breakout groups presented throughout the report have higher margins of error. Judgments based on statistics with very low sample sizes should be made with caution. Statistics are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Employee pay rate and status

Both hourly pay rates and annual gross salaries were collected on the survey. Approximately 98% of full-time medical assistants are paid hourly, while roughly 2% are paid by annual salary. Of the 6,134 respondents who are practicing medical assistants, approximately 91% work full time while 9% work part time. For the purposes of this report, results represent compensation and benefits for the full-time employee population.

Compensation

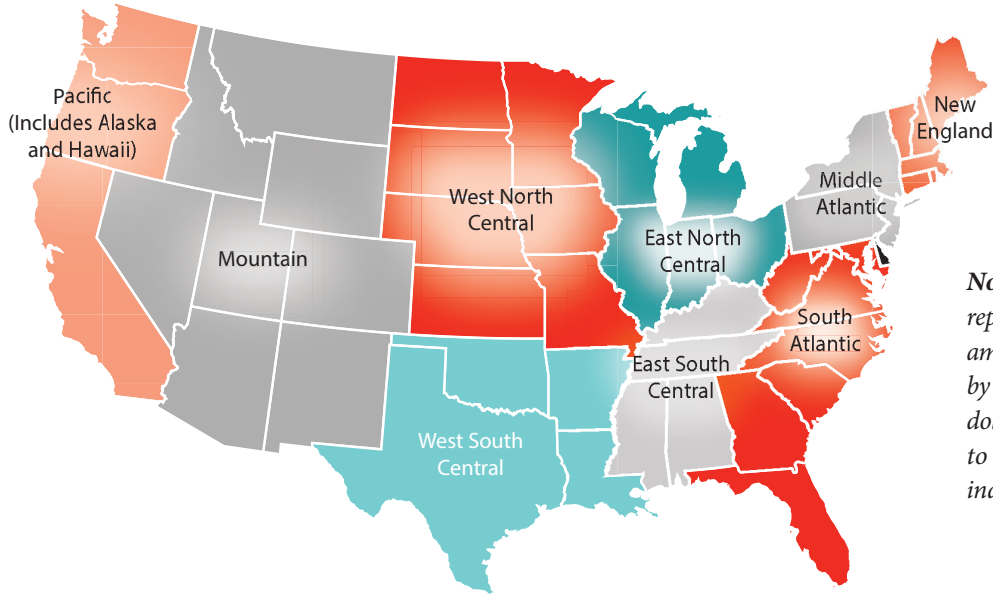
Overall, of those surveyed, full-time medical assistants holding a current CMA (AAMA) certification earn an average of \$18.32 per hour or an average annual salary of \$34,474.11. Average hourly wages and salary varied for CMAs (AAMA) according to years of experience and other factors, which are broken down as follows.

By geographic region

The average annual earnings and hourly wages were computed for geographic regions of the United States (Figure 1). The Pacific region showed the highest earnings for full-time current CMAs (AAMA), with averages of \$41,464.90 annually and \$22.02 hourly. Across the country, the New England region turned in the second-highest annual earnings (\$36,594.63), while West North Central region had the second-highest hourly wages (\$19.52). The full comparison is shown in Table 1.

CMA (AAMA) overall
 average earnings
 Hourly: \$18.32
 Salary: \$34,474

Figure 1. Regions based on the United States Census divisions



Note: Data presented in this report represent current-dollar values (i.e., dollar amounts are not adjusted for cost of living by region). To learn more about constant-dollar values in your region, search online to view cost-of-living adjustments for individual locations.

Table 1. Geographic region Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience

	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Northeast						
New England	\$16.42 30,653	\$18.33 34,651	\$19.21 37,278	\$20.31 38,264	\$21.52 40,953	\$19.27 36,595
Middle Atlantic	15.81 30,250	17.12 32,891	19.04 36,500	18.87 37,792	20.45 39,744	18.39 35,773
Midwest						
East North Central	15.74 28,747	16.66 30,776	17.41 31,801	18.18 34,066	20.01 37,517	17.62 32,668
West North Central	16.84 31,979	18.08 32,630	19.63 35,389	19.91 36,850	21.49 40,366	19.52 35,975
South						
South Atlantic	14.74 27,958	15.89 29,921	16.80 31,895	18.14 35,285	19.40 37,890	17.08 32,747
East South Central	14.43 27,550	14.86 26,742	16.25 29,542	17.73 33,000	18.98 37,614	16.96 32,333
West South Central	* *	17.43 32,500	17.14 34,026	17.24 32,095	18.86 36,738	17.05 32,615
West						
Mountain	15.81 29,603	16.64 30,519	18.30 35,663	18.69 35,646	21.37 40,519	18.27 34,371
Pacific	19.31 34,444	20.96 39,009	22.42 42,793	23.43 44,681	23.93 46,343	20.02 41,465

*Insufficient response

By work setting

The overwhelming majority of CMA (AAMA)–certified medical assistants surveyed work in physicians’ offices. Nearly 95% of medical assistant respondents are employed in that setting, with roughly 1% in ambulatory surgery and another 2% in “other.” Another 1% of respondents work in inpatient settings. The breakdown of wages and earnings by work setting is shown in Table 2. Figures for home health settings are not listed due to insufficient response numbers.

By practice specialty

Nearly 62% of medical assistant respondents who are CMA (AAMA) certified work in a primary care practice. Another 32% work in practices with other medical and surgical specialties. The income figures for practice specialty are shown in Table 3.

By number of specialties

Almost 52% of CMA (AAMA) respondents work in a single-specialty practice, while 45% work in a multispecialty setting. The income figures for full-time current CMAs (AAMA) by number of specialties are listed in Table 4.

Table 2. Work setting		Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience				
Work setting	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Physician practice	\$15.98 29,643	\$17.15 31,777	\$18.20 34,090	\$19.09 36,221	\$20.59 39,372	\$18.31 34,439
Ambulatory surgery	* *	18.08 33,711	* *	* *	21.82 42,750	19.21 36,900
Inpatient setting	* *	16.94 32,731	* *	* *	19.00 36,750	18.20 35,218
Other	* *	17.78 32,779	19.45 34,750	19.70 35,325	19.75 38,438	18.61 34,450

Table 3. Practice specialty		Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience				
Practice specialty	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Primary care	\$15.97 29,593	\$17.04 31,695	\$18.08 33,818	\$19.07 36,028	\$20.51 38,808	\$18.19 34,078
All other medical and surgical specialties	16.21 29,953	17.56 32,322	18.46 34,758	19.32 37,148	20.82 40,426	18.73 35,541
Other	15.92 30,255	17.40 32,432	18.51 34,598	19.34 36,127	20.58 39,585	18.37 34,553

Table 4. Number of specialties		Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience				
Number of specialties	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Single specialty	\$16.03 29,855	\$17.04 31,729	\$18.26 34,352	\$18.95 36,046	\$20.44 38,982	\$18.24 34,411
Multiple specialties	16.14 29,867	17.43 32,453	18.34 34,383	19.52 37,101	20.94 40,180	18.58 34,976
Other	16.30 31,600	17.31 32,015	18.96 34,786	19.14 33,750	21.41 39,481	18.34 33,903

*Insufficient response

Employment benefits

Roughly 97% of all full-time CMAs (AAMA) receive some form of benefits package from their employer.

Insurance

About 86% of full-time CMAs (AAMA) receive paid vacation. Approximately 83% receive dental coverage, while 74% receive major medical coverage. Nearly 77% receive vision coverage, and 63% receive disability coverage. The full range of benefits for full-time CMAs (AAMA) is shown in Figure 3.

AAMA membership and conference

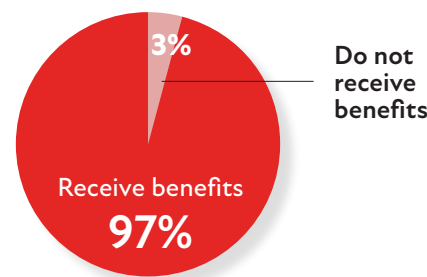
When asked if employers offer to help pay for various AAMA expenses, 14% of full-time medical assistants who are AAMA members responded that their employers pay their membership dues in full (Figure 4). In addition, approximately 7% have their annual conference registration fees paid for in full, and just over 4% have travel and lodging paid by their employers. ♦

The American Association of Medical Assistants thanks all the participants who made this survey possible.

References

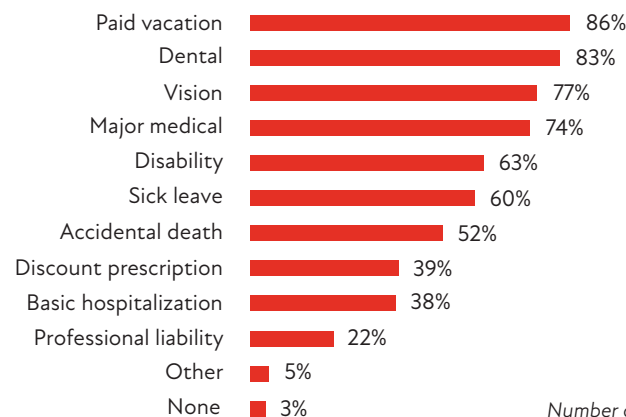
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Figure 2. Benefits received by full-time CMAs (AAMA)



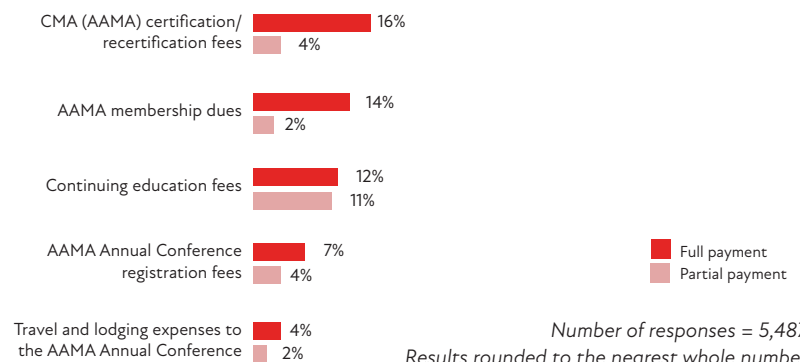
Number of responses = 5,264
Results rounded to the nearest whole number

Figure 3. Insurance benefits received by full-time CMAs (AAMA)



Number of responses = 5,264
Results rounded to the nearest whole number

Figure 4. Dues assistance received by full-time medical assistant AAMA members



Number of responses = 5,487
Results rounded to the nearest whole number