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# Content Outline

For the CMA (AAMA)<sup>®</sup> Certification Exam

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



**CMA (AAMA)**

SETS THE BAR FOR EXCELLENCE IN MEDICAL ASSISTING



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# Number and Percent of Questions by Category

| Section               | Category                                       | Number/Percent |
|-----------------------|--|----------------|
| <b>General</b>        |  |                |
| I. A.                 | Psychology                                     |                |
| I. B.                 | Communication                                  |                |
| I. C.                 | Professionalism                                |                |
| I. D.                 | Medical law/regulatory guidelines              |                |
| I. E.                 | Medical ethics                                 |                |
| I. F.                 | Risk management, quality assurance, and safety |                |
| I. G.                 | Medical terminology                            |                |
|                       | Number of questions                            | 50             |
|                       | Percent of questions                           | 28%            |
| <b>Administrative</b> |  |                |
| II. H.                | Medical reception                              |                |
| II. I.                | Patient navigator/advocate                     |                |
| II. J.                | Medical business practices                     |                |
| II. K.                | Establishing patient medical records           |                |
| II. L.                | Scheduling appointments                        |                |
| II. M.                | Practice finances                              |                |
|                       | Number of questions                            | 45             |
|                       | Percent of questions                           | 25%            |
| <b>Clinical</b>       |  |                |
| III. N.               | Anatomy and physiology                         |                |
| III. O.               | Infection control                              |                |
| III. P.               | Patient intake and documentation of care       |                |
| III. Q.               | Patient preparation and assisting the provider |                |
| III. R.               | Nutrition                                      |                |
| III. S.               | Collecting and processing specimens            |                |
| III. T.               | Diagnostic testing                             |                |
| III. U.               | Pharmacology                                   |                |
| III. V.               | Emergency management/basic first aid           |                |
|                       | Number of questions                            | 85             |
|                       | Percent of questions                           | 47%            |
|                       | 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. General

### A. Psychology

#### 1. Understanding Human Behavior

- a. Behavioral theories
  - (1) Maslow
  - (2) Erikson
- b. Defense mechanisms
  - (1) Common types
  - (2) Recognition and management

#### 2. Human Growth and Development

- a. Normal developmental patterns/milestones

#### 3. Death and Dying Stages

### B. Communication

#### 1. Therapeutic/Adaptive Responses to Diverse Populations

- a. Visually impaired
- b. Hearing impaired
- c. Age specific
  - (1) Geriatric
  - (2) Pediatric/adolescent
- d. Seriously/terminally ill
- e. Intellectual disability
- f. Illiterate
- g. Non-English speaking
- h. Anxious/angry/distraught
- i. Socially/culturally/ethnically diverse

#### 2. Nonverbal Communication

- a. Body language
  - (1) Posture
  - (2) Position
  - (3) Facial expression
  - (4) Territoriality/physical boundaries
  - (5) Gestures
  - (6) Touch

- (7) Mannerisms
- (8) Eye contact

#### 3. Communication Cycle

- a. Sender-message-receiver-feedback
- b. Listening skills
  - (1) Active/therapeutic
- c. Assess level of understanding
  - (1) Reflection
  - (2) Restatement
  - (3) Clarification
  - (4) Feedback
- d. Barriers to communication
  - (1) Internal distractions
    - (a) Pain
    - (b) Hunger
    - (c) Anger
  - (2) External/environmental distractions
    - (a) Temperature
    - (b) Noise

#### 4. Collection of Data

- a. Types of questions
  - (1) Exploratory
  - (2) Open-ended
  - (3) Closed/Direct

#### 5. Telephone Techniques

- a. Call management
  - (1) Screening/gathering data
  - (2) Emergency/urgent situations
- b. Messages
  - (1) Taking messages
  - (2) Leaving messages

#### 6. Interpersonal Skills

- a. Displaying impartial conduct without regard to race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical challenges, special needs, lifestyle choices
- b. Recognizing stereotypes and biases

- c. Demonstrating empathy/sympathy/compassion

### C. Professionalism

#### 1. Professional Behavior

- a. Professional situations
  - (1) Displaying tact, diplomacy, courtesy, respect, dignity
  - (2) Demonstrating responsibility, integrity/honesty
  - (3) Responding to criticism
- b. Professional image

#### 2. Performing as a Team Member

- a. Principles of health care team dynamics
  - (1) Cooperation for optimal outcomes
  - (2) Identification of the roles and credentials of health care team members
- b. Time management principles
  - (1) Prioritizing responsibilities

### D. Medical Law/Regulatory Guidelines

#### 1. Advance Directives

- a. Living will
- b. Medical durable power of attorney
- c. Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA)

#### 2. Uniform Anatomical Gift Act

#### 3. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

#### 4. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

#### 5. Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act (CLIA '88)

#### 6. Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA)

## 7. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

- a. Health insurance portability access and renewal without preexisting conditions
- b. Coordination of care to prevent duplication of services

## 8. Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act

- a. Patient's right to inspect, amend, and restrict access to their medical record

## 9. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)

- a. Controlled Substances Act of 1970

## 10. Medical Assistant Scope of Practice

- a. Consequences of failing to operate within scope

## 11. Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)

## 12. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

## 13. Consumer Protection Acts

- a. Fair Debt Collection Practices Act
- b. Truth in Lending Act of 1968 (Regulation Z)

## 14. Public Health and Welfare Disclosure

- a. Public health statutes
  - (1) Communicable diseases
  - (2) Vital statistics
  - (3) Abuse/neglect/exploitation against child/elder
    - (a) Domestic abuse
  - (4) Wounds of violence

## 15. Confidentiality

- a. Electronic access audit/activity log
- b. Use and disclosure of personal/protected health information (PHI)
  - (1) Consent/authorization to release
  - (2) Drug and alcohol treatment records
  - (3) HIV-related information
  - (4) Mental health

## 16. Health Care Rights and Responsibilities

- a. Patients' Bill of Rights/Patient Care Partnership
- b. Professional liability
  - (1) Current standard of care
  - (2) Standards of conduct
  - (3) Malpractice coverage
- c. Consent to treat
  - (1) Informed consent
  - (2) Implied consent
  - (3) Expressed consent
  - (4) Patient incompetence
  - (5) Emancipated minor
  - (6) Mature minor

## 17. Medicolegal Terms and Doctrines

- a. Subpoena duces tecum
- b. Subpoena
- c. Respondeat superior
- d. Res ipsa loquitor
- e. Locum tenens
- f. Defendant-plaintiff
- g. Deposition
- h. Arbitration-mediation
- i. Good Samaritan laws

## 18. Categories of Law

- a. Criminal law
  - (1) Felony/misdemeanor
- b. Civil law
  - (1) Contracts (physician-patient relationships)
    - (a) Legal obligations to the patient
    - (b) Consequences for patient noncompliance
    - (c) Termination of medical care
      - (i) Elements/behaviors for withdrawal of care
      - (ii) Patient notification and documentation
    - (d) Ownership of medical records
  - (2) Torts
    - (a) Invasion of privacy
    - (b) Negligence
    - (c) Intentional torts
      - (i) Battery
      - (ii) Assault
      - (iii) Slander
      - (iv) Libel
- c. Statutory law
  - (1) Medical practice acts
- d. Common law (Legal precedents)

## E. Medical Ethics

### 1. Ethical Standards

### 2. Factors Affecting Ethical Decisions

- a. Legal
- b. Moral

## F. Risk Management, Quality Assurance, and Safety

### 1. Workplace Accident Prevention

- a. Slips/trips/falls

### 2. Safety Signs, Symbols, Labels

### 3. Environmental Safety

- a. Ergonomics
- b. Electrical safety
- c. Fire prevention/extinguisher use/regulations

### 4. Compliance Reporting

- a. Reporting unsafe activities and behaviors
- b. Disclosing errors in patient care
- c. Insurance fraud, waste, and abuse
- d. Conflicts of interest
- e. Incident reports

## G. Medical Terminology

### 1. Word Parts

- a. Basic structure
  - (1) Roots/combining forms
  - (2) Prefixes
  - (3) Suffixes

### 2. Definitions/Medical Terminology

- a. Diseases and pathologies
- b. Diagnostic procedures
- c. Surgical procedures
- d. Medical specialties

## II. Administrative

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## H. Medical Reception

### 1. Medical Record Preparation

### 2. Demographic Data Review

- a. Identity theft prevention
- b. Insurance eligibility verification

### 3. Handling Vendors/Business Associates

### 4. Reception Room Environment

- a. Comfort
- b. Safety
- c. Sanitation

### 5. Practice Information Packet

- a. Office policies
- b. Patient financial responsibilities

## I. Patient Navigator/Advocate

### 1. Resource Information

- a. Provide information about community resources
- b. Facilitate referrals to community resources
- c. Referral follow-up

## J. Medical Business Practices

### 1. Written Communication

- a. Letters
- b. Memos/interoffice communications
- c. Reports

### 2. Business Equipment

- a. Routine maintenance
- b. Safety precautions

### 3. Office Supply Inventory

- a. Inventory control/recordkeeping

### 4. Electronic Applications

- a. Medical management systems
  - (1) Database reports
  - (2) Meaningful use regulations
- b. Spreadsheets, graphs
- c. Electronic mail
- d. Security
  - (1) Password/screen saver
  - (2) Encryption
  - (3) Firewall
- e. Transmission of information
  - (1) Facsimile/scanner
  - (2) Patient portal to health data
- f. Social media

## K. Establishing Patient Medical Records

### 1. Recognize and Interpret Data

- a. History and physical
- b. Discharge summary
- c. Operative note
- d. Diagnostic test/lab report
- e. Clinic progress note
- f. Consultation report
- g. Correspondence
- h. Charts, graphs, tables
- i. Flow sheet

### 2. Charting Systems

- a. Problem-oriented medical record (POMR)
- b. Source-oriented medical record (SOMR)

## L. Scheduling Appointments

### 1. Scheduling Guidelines

- a. Appointment matrix
- b. New patient appointments
  - (1) Identify required information
- c. Established patient appointments
  - (1) Routine
  - (2) Urgent/emergency
- d. Patient flow
  - (1) Patient needs/preference
  - (2) Physician preference
  - (3) Facility/equipment requirements
- e. Outside services (e.g., lab, X-ray, surgery, outpatient procedures, hospital admissions)

### 2. Appointment Protocols

- a. Legal aspects
- b. Physician referrals
- c. Cancellations/no-shows
- d. Physician delay/unavailability
- e. Reminders/recall systems
  - (1) Appointment cards
  - (2) Phone calls/text messages/e-mail notifications
  - (3) Tickler file

## M. Practice Finances

### 1. Financial Terminology

- a. Accounts receivable
- b. Accounts payable

- c. Assets
- d. Liabilities
- e. Aging of accounts
- f. Debits
- g. Credits
- h. Diagnosis Related Groups (DRGs)
- i. Relative Value Units (RVUs)

### 2. Financial Procedures

- a. Payment receipts
  - (1) Co-pays
- b. Data entry
  - (1) Post charges
  - (2) Post payments
  - (3) Post adjustments
- c. Manage petty cash account
- d. Financial calculations
- e. Billing procedures
  - (1) Itemized statements
  - (2) Billing cycles
- f. Collection procedures
  - (1) Aging of accounts
  - (2) Preplanned payment options
  - (3) Credit arrangements
  - (4) Use of collection agencies

### 3. Diagnostic and Procedural Coding Applications

- a. Current Procedural Terminology (CPT)
  - (1) Modifiers
  - (2) Upcoding
  - (3) Bundling of charges
- b. International Classification of Diseases, Clinical Modifications (ICD-CM) (*Current schedule*)
- c. Linking procedure and diagnosis codes
- d. Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS Level II)

### 4. Third-Party Payers/Insurance

- a. Types of plans
  - (1) Commercial plans
  - (2) Government plans
    - (a) Medicare
      - (i) Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN)
    - (b) Medicaid
    - (c) TRICARE/CHAMPVA
  - (3) Managed care organizations (MCOs)
    - (a) Managed care requirements
      - (i) Care referrals

- (ii) Precertification
    - [a] Diagnostic and surgical procedures
  - (iii) Prior authorization
    - [a] Medications
  - (4) Workers' compensation
- b. Insurance claims
- (1) Submission
  - (2) Appeals/denials
  - (3) Explanation of benefits (EOB)

## III. Clinical

### N. Anatomy and Physiology

1. **Body as a Whole**
  - a. Structural units
  - b. Anatomical divisions, body cavities
  - c. Anatomical positions and directions
  - d. Body planes, quadrants
2. **Body Systems Including Normal Structure, Function, and Interrelationships Across the Life Span**
  - a. Integumentary
  - b. Musculoskeletal
  - c. Nervous
  - d. Cardiovascular, hematopoietic, and lymphatic
  - e. Respiratory
  - f. Digestive
  - g. Urinary
  - h. Reproductive
  - i. Endocrine
  - j. Sensory
3. **Pathophysiology and Diseases of Body Systems**
  - a. Integumentary
  - b. Musculoskeletal
  - c. Nervous
  - d. Cardiovascular, hematopoietic, and lymphatic
  - e. Respiratory
  - f. Digestive
  - g. Urinary
  - h. Reproductive
  - i. Endocrine
  - j. Sensory

### O. Infection Control

1. **Infectious Agents**
  - a. Bacteria
  - b. Viruses
  - c. Protozoa
  - d. Fungi
  - e. Parasites
2. **Modes of Transmission**
  - a. Direct
  - b. Indirect
  - c. Airborne
  - d. Droplet
  - e. Inhalation
3. **Infection Cycle/Chain of Infection**
4. **Body's Natural Barriers**
5. **Medical Asepsis**
  - a. Hand hygiene
    - (1) Hand washing
    - (2) Alcohol-based hand rub
  - b. Sanitization
  - c. Disinfection
6. **Surgical Asepsis**
  - a. Surgical scrub
  - b. Sterilization techniques/ Autoclave
    - (1) Preparing items
    - (2) Wrapping
    - (3) Sterilization indicators
7. **Standard Precautions/Blood-Borne Pathogen Standards**
  - a. Body fluids
  - b. Secretions
  - c. Excretions
  - d. Blood
    - (1) HIV-HBV-HCV
  - e. Mucous membranes
  - f. Personal protective equipment (PPE)
    - (1) Gowns
    - (2) Gloves
    - (3) Masks
    - (4) Caps
    - (5) Eye protection
  - g. Post-exposure plan
8. **Biohazard Disposal/Regulated Waste**
  - a. Sharps
  - b. Blood and body fluids

- c. Safety data sheets (SDS)
- d. Spill kit

### P. Patient Intake and Documentation of Care

1. **Medical Record Documentation**
  - a. Subjective data
    - (1) Chief complaint
    - (2) Present illness
    - (3) Past medical history
    - (4) Family history
    - (5) Social and occupational history
    - (6) Review of systems
  - b. Objective data
  - c. Making corrections
  - d. Treatment/compliance

### Q. Patient Preparation and Assisting the Provider

1. **Vital Signs/Anthropometrics**
  - a. Blood pressure
    - (1) Technique
    - (2) Equipment
      - (a) Stethoscope
      - (b) Sphygmomanometer
  - b. Pulse
    - (1) Technique
      - (a) Pulse points
      - (b) Rate and rhythm
  - c. Height/weight/BMI
    - (1) Technique
    - (2) Equipment
  - d. Body temperature
    - (1) Technique
    - (2) Equipment
  - e. Oxygen saturation/pulse oximetry
    - (1) Technique
    - (2) Equipment
  - f. Respiration rate
    - (1) Technique
2. **Recognize and Report Age-Specific Normal and Abnormal Vital Signs**
3. **Examinations**
  - a. Methods
    - (1) Auscultation
    - (2) Palpation
    - (3) Percussion
    - (4) Mensuration



- (5) Manipulation
- (6) Inspection
- b. Body positions/draping
  - (1) Sims
  - (2) Fowlers
  - (3) Supine
  - (4) Knee-chest
  - (5) Prone
  - (6) Lithotomy
  - (7) Dorsal recumbent
- c. Pediatric exam
  - (1) Growth chart
    - (a) Measurements
    - (i) Techniques
- d. OB-GYN exam
  - (1) Pelvic exam/PAP smear
  - (2) Prenatal/postpartum exams

#### 4. Procedures

- a. Procedure explanation and patient instructions
- b. Supplies, equipment, and techniques
  - (1) Eye irrigation
  - (2) Ear irrigation
  - (3) Dressing change
  - (4) Suture/staple removal
  - (5) Sterile procedures
    - (a) Surgical assisting
    - (b) Surgical tray prep
    - (c) Antiseptic skin prep
    - (d) Sterile field boundaries
    - (e) Surgical instruments
      - (i) Classifications
      - (ii) Instrument use

#### 5. Patient Education/Health Coach

- a. Health maintenance and disease prevention
  - (1) Diabetic teaching and home care
    - (a) Home blood sugar monitoring
  - (2) Instruct on use of patient mobility equipment and assistive devices
  - (3) Pre-/post-op care instructions
  - (4) Patient administered medications
  - (5) Home blood pressure monitoring and lifestyle controls
  - (6) Home anticoagulation monitoring
  - (7) Home cholesterol monitoring
- b. Alternative medicine

#### 6. Wellness/Preventive Care

- a. Cancer screening
- b. Sexually transmitted infections
- c. Hygienic practices
  - (1) Hand washing

- (2) Cough etiquette
- d. Smoking risks and cessation
- e. Recognition of substance abuse
- f. Osteoporosis screening/bone density scan
- g. Domestic violence screening and detection

## R. Nutrition

### 1. Basic Principles

- a. Food nutrients
  - (1) Carbohydrates
  - (2) Fats
  - (3) Proteins
  - (4) Minerals/electrolytes
  - (5) Vitamins
  - (6) Fiber
  - (7) Water
- b. Dietary supplements

### 2. Special Dietary Needs

- a. Weight control
- b. Diabetes
- c. Cardiovascular disease
- d. Hypertension
- e. Cancer
- f. Lactose sensitivity/intolerance
- g. Gluten free
- h. Food allergies

### 3. Eating Disorders

## S. Collecting and Processing Specimens

### 1. Methods of Collection

- a. Blood
  - (1) Venipuncture
    - (a) Site selection
    - (b) Site prep
    - (c) Equipment
      - (i) Evacuated tubes
      - (ii) Tube additives
      - (iii) Needles
  - (2) Capillary/dermal puncture
- b. Urine
  - (1) Random
  - (2) Midstream/clean catch
  - (3) Timed 24-hour collection
  - (4) Catheterization
  - (5) Pediatric urine collector
- c. Fecal specimen
- d. Sputum specimen

- e. Swabs
  - (1) Throat
  - (2) Genital
  - (3) Wound
  - (4) Nasopharyngeal

### 2. Prepare, Process, and Examine Specimens

- a. Proper labeling
- b. Sources of contamination
- c. Specimen preservation
  - (1) Refrigeration
  - (2) Fixative
- d. Recordkeeping
- e. Incubator
- f. Centrifuge
- g. Microscope
- h. Inoculating a culture
- i. Microbiologic slides
  - (1) Wet mount

### 3. Laboratory Quality Control/Quality Assurance

- a. Testing protocols
- b. Testing records and performance logs
- c. Daily equipment maintenance
- d. Calibration
- e. Daily control testing
- f. Monitor temperature controls
- g. Reagent storage
- h. CLIA-waived tests

### 4. Laboratory Panels and Performing Selected Tests

- a. Urinalysis
  - (1) Physical
  - (2) Chemical
  - (3) Microscopic
  - (4) Culture
- b. Hematology panel
  - (1) Hematocrit
  - (2) Hemoglobin
  - (3) Erythrocyte sedimentation rate
  - (4) Automated cell counts
    - (a) Red blood cell (RBC)
    - (b) White blood cell (WBC)
    - (c) Platelet
  - (5) Coagulation testing/INR
- c. Chemistry/metabolic testing
  - (1) Glucose
  - (2) Kidney function tests
  - (3) Liver function tests
  - (4) Lipid profile
  - (5) Hemoglobin A1c

- d. Immunology
  - (1) Mononucleosis test
  - (2) Rapid Group A Streptococcus test
  - (3) C-reactive protein (CRP)
  - (4) HCG pregnancy test
  - (5) H. pylori
  - (6) Influenza
- e. Fecal occult blood/guaiac testing

## T. Diagnostic Testing

### 1. Cardiovascular Tests

- a. Electrocardiography (EKG/ECG)
  - (1) Perform standard 12-lead
  - (2) Lead placement
  - (3) Patient prep
  - (4) Recognize artifacts
  - (5) Recognize rhythms, arrhythmias
  - (6) Rhythm strips
- b. Holter monitors
- c. Cardiac stress test

### 2. Vision Tests

- a. Color
- b. Acuity/distance
  - (1) Snellen
  - (2) E chart
  - (3) Jaeger card
- c. Ocular pressure
- d. Visual fields

### 3. Audiometric/Hearing Tests

- a. Pure tone audiometry
- b. Speech and word recognition
- c. Tympanometry

### 4. Allergy Tests

- a. Scratch test
- b. Intradermal skin testing

### 5. Respiratory Tests

- a. Pulmonary function tests (PFT)
- b. Spirometry
- c. Peak flow rate
- d. Tuberculosis tests/purified protein derivative (PPD) skin tests

### 6. Distinguish Between Normal/Abnormal Laboratory and Diagnostic Test Results

## U. Pharmacology

(For the 50 most commonly used medications, visit the following website: <https://clincalc.com/DrugStats/Top200Drugs.aspx>.)

### 1. Medications

- a. Classes of drugs
- b. Drug actions/desired effects
- c. Adverse reactions
- d. Physicians' Desk Reference (PDR)
- e. Storage of drugs

### 2. Preparing and Administering Oral and Parenteral Medications

- a. Dosage
  - (1) Metric conversion
  - (2) Units of measurements
  - (3) Calculations
- b. Routes of administration
  - (1) Intramuscular
    - (a) Z-tract
  - (2) Subcutaneous
  - (3) Oral/sublingual/buccal
  - (4) Topical
  - (5) Inhalation
  - (6) Instillation (eye-ear-nose)
  - (7) Intradermal
  - (8) Transdermal
  - (9) Vaginal
  - (10) Rectal
- c. Injection site
  - (1) Site selection
  - (2) Needle length and gauge
- d. Medication packaging
  - (1) Multidose vials
  - (2) Ampules
  - (3) Unit dose
  - (4) Prefilled cartridge-needle units
  - (5) Powder for reconstitution
- e. Six Rights of Medication Administration
  - (1) Right patient, right drug, right route, right time, right dose, right documentation

### 3. Prescriptions

- a. E-prescribing
- b. Controlled substance guidelines

### 4. Medication Recordkeeping

- a. Reporting/documenting errors

### 5. Immunizations

- a. Childhood
- b. Adult
- c. Recordkeeping
  - (1) Vaccine information statement (VIS)
- d. Vaccine storage

## V. Emergency Management/Basic First Aid

### 1. Assessment and Screening

- a. Treatment algorithms/flow charts
- b. Triage algorithms/flow charts

### 2. Identification and Response to Emergencies

- a. Bleeding/pressure points
- b. Burns
- c. Cardiac and respiratory arrest
- d. Foreign body obstruction
- e. Choking
- f. Diabetic ketoacidosis
- g. Insulin shock
- h. Bone fractures
- i. Poisoning
- j. Seizures
- k. Shock
- l. Cerebral vascular accident (CVA)
- m. Syncope
- n. Vertigo
- o. Wounds
- p. Cold exposure
- q. Heat exposure
- r. Joint dislocations/sprains/strains
- s. Asthmatic attack
- t. Hyperventilation
- u. Animal bite
- v. Insect bite
- w. Concussion

### 3. Office Emergency Readiness

- a. Equipment
  - (1) Crash cart supplies
  - (2) Automated external defibrillator
- b. Emergency response plan
  - (1) Evacuation plan



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS®  
20 N. WACKER DR., STE. 1575  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60606

website: [www.aama-ntl.org](http://www.aama-ntl.org) 800/228-2262

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