

AAMA Student Essay Award



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS®

2025 Essay Competition Excel Winner

Christopher Gress

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Essay Theme: *Describe your strategies for professional development as a medical assistant and how you will advocate for the profession's essential role on the health care team.*

As a medical assistant student and proud member of the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA), I view professional development not only as a personal responsibility but as a continuous journey toward excellence in patient care. My strategies for growth revolve around a commitment to lifelong learning, practical experience, and active engagement with professional networks like the AAMA.

My path to medical assisting has been one of personal transformation. In 2017, I began college as a creative writing major but lacked direction and accountability. After relocating to Idaho in 2020, I faced a difficult period marked by depression and uncertainty. Everything shifted in 2022 when I enrolled in Job Corps. Initially drawn to veterinary studies, I quickly discovered my passion for medical assisting. The combination of hands-on clinical work, fast-paced teamwork, and the chance to support others in a healthcare setting immediately resonated with me.

Since that turning point, I have focused on building a strong foundation through both academic coursework and personal resilience. I faced academic hurdles, such as struggling in Math and Microbiology, and paused my studies temporarily to help care for my younger brother. However, those challenges only deepened my commitment. I now approach each course with purpose and professionalism, understanding that every skill I gain contributes directly to my ability to serve patients and collaborate with colleagues.

Looking forward, I plan to use the AAMA website as a vital resource for continuing education. Its certification tools, professional development modules, and up-to-date content will help me stay informed about advancements in the field and sharpen my competencies. I also aim to attend conferences, webinars, and workshops to network with peers and industry leaders, further expanding my clinical and administrative skill set.

Advocating for the medical assisting profession means sharing its value and versatility with others. Medical assistants are essential to the healthcare team: we bridge the gap between providers and patients, offering both technical expertise and compassionate care. I will advocate for our profession by mentoring future students, educating patients about our role, and encouraging my peers to pursue certification and ongoing learning. Through professionalism and visibility, we can elevate the field's recognition and respect.

No matter the setting, I will be committed to growth, teamwork, and making a positive difference every day.

This profession has given me direction, purpose, and a sense of belonging. Participating in the AAMA Student Essay Competition is an opportunity to celebrate that journey, and to reaffirm my dedication to both personal excellence and the advancement of medical assisting.