

Featured 2023 AAMA Student Essay Award Submissions

Essay Theme: *What are three personal characteristics that will assist you in becoming the best medical assistant you can be, and why is it important to obtain a medical assisting credential?*



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF MEDICAL ASSISTANTS®

Jacqueline Jeter

Tri-County Technical College in Pendleton, South Carolina

My name is Jacqueline Jeter, and I wanted to share three personal characteristics about myself that I believe are the #1 key factors that will inspire me and continue to grow me in becoming one of the BEST medical assistants.

I am compassionate. In order to become anything worthy of a calling in life, a person has to have, and exhibit compassion. Having this about oneself will show the need and the wanting to go “above” and “beyond” for someone else.

The view of compassion has been erased from human nature as a whole. Compassion for me is showing my patient that what he/she is experiencing, is devastating, but I will be by that patient, and also be there to pray for that patient, and show love and kindness, as well as be the medical assistant that not only does a “job” but shows what it means to “care.” That is the compassionate medical assistant I will be. To be willing to go above and beyond, NO MATTER WHAT!

Another personal characteristic about me is having humility. I believe that being a humbled medical assistant will enable me to see the other side of the medical field with different lenses, and a humbled perspective. I want ALL of my patients I get the opportunity to care for, to know that they are not just another “number”, but they matter to me.

The last characteristic about myself I would like to add is the act of selfless love. When a person chooses to love another person with their whole heart, and they don’t ask, nor want anything in return, the love is not forced, but given sacrificially. That is the type of love I want to show all of my patients. Selfless love does not boast, or lie, or is fearful, nor does this type of love envy, or want something in return. True genuine love CHOOSES to love with humility, and compassion.

In addition, I also believe that obtaining a medical assistant credential is extremely important because this allows the person to put what they learned into practice and extend what the person has learned into real life situations. Obtaining and having credentials is not the MAIN ingredient, but it sure does lay down the foundation of showing the value of what it takes to become one!!!

Thank you so much for your time and consideration. I hope anyone that reads this letter, will begin to get a glimpse of my heart behind what I get to do, and that is helping others, ONE PERSON AND SOUL AT A TIME!!

Catherine Ajeh

Owens Community College

As Medical Assistants it is important to know your role in a provider's office. We are patient advocates and have listening skills to be able to communicate effectively with patients.

Three characteristics that can make me become the best medical assistant are:

Compassionate: As a medical assistant being caring and compassionate towards patients is one of the most important qualities. Being able to listen to patients and having empathy instead of sympathy when needed, makes the patient feel safe. Medical assistants should offer to be compassionate and support patients, patients need to feel that the medical team understands their concerns and has sympathy for their emotional state. Learning to give full attention while talking with patients will make the comfortable whether they are in pain, feeling ill, suffering from mental or emotional stress, or being seen for a check-up.

Team Player: To have a good rapport and be a collaborator is an important skill. Working in an office where everyone communicates and works as a team allows the team to accomplish everything asked of them. As a good collaborator, you will be able to follow directions, complete your tasks and place the needs of the patients before anything else. When staffs collaborate effectively, the team improves patient outcomes, prevents medical errors, improves efficiency, and increases patient satisfaction.

I am currently completing my externship of 160 hours in primary care; the office manager ensures that everyone is cared for including both patients and staff. Making sure we work together and communicate with each other. One thing I have learned after working there is that their teamwork works. They make sure their patients are the priority in terms of care.

Ethical: Another significant role as a Medical Assistant is to keep everything you see or discuss with your patients confidential and respect their privacy. Patients are sometimes at their most vulnerable when they come to see the providers. They should not worry that something they do or say will be shared. As a medical assistant, it is important to be able to render service with full respect for the consideration of humanity and uphold the honor and high principles of the medical assisting profession. I plan to continue to improve my knowledge and never feel that I cannot ask for help from co-workers.

It is important to obtain the Medical Assistant credential to demonstrate to employers and patients that you have medical assisting knowledge with clinical and administrative skills and keep up with medical trends.

2023 Featured Essay

Mary Elizabeth Ball, CMA (AAMA)

Aiken Technical College

Determination is at the forefront of it all. I refused to give up my dream of becoming a medical assistant. I had to overcome self-doubt, a late diagnosis of ADHD, and the “You’re too old to go back to school” comments, to persevere. I will use that same determination to advocate for the best care for patients. I will continue to expand my knowledge and apply what I learn to become the best medical assistant. I will strive for consistency at a higher level because that is who I am. I am determined to move forward and will persevere through adversity to become the best version of myself.

I embrace empathy with compassion, allowing me to relate to my classmates in support. I always take time to encourage others, boost their confidence, help them realize their strengths, and discover a new determination to succeed. As a medical assistant, I will take time to build rapport between myself, and the patients. I will actively listen to patients gathering the necessary information to serve as a liaison between them and the provider. I will be there for my coworkers to offer help and lend a hand. I will work always as a team and treat others as I would ask to be treated. Empathy is essential for a medical assistant to interact effectively with patients, coworkers, and providers.

I exude positivity, a trait often overlooked, but is my strongest ally in life. With positivity comes all things good in this world. Just as the worst attitude can ruin the best day, a positive attitude can improve the worst day. It set me on my path to being the best medical assistant I can be. I am strong, dependable, an excellent communicator, and care deeply about everyone who crosses my path. While these are all excellent qualities for one to possess, none would have the fullest impact possible without positivity. This is why positivity is the characteristic that I am most proud of.

Even though good personal characteristics may lead to a good medical assistant, earning a credential is essential. Someone in the medical field needs to have the proper education as patients are dependent on you for their care. You will receive the best and most up-to-date education, through an accredited program with knowledgeable instructors. You will have experience in a realistic lab and office setting to gain extensive preparation before beginning your career. Completing an accredited program will allow one to sit for the AAMA exam to earn the CMA (AAMA) credential. A credentialed medical assistant will have the ability and knowledge to safely perform their duty with confidence. Employers will seek out a CMA (AAMA) knowing that they have achieved competency in affective behavior, administration, and clinical skills. It requires a combination of excellent personal characteristics and a credential from a trusted organization to make the best medical assistants. The AAMA sets the gold standard that I will be honored to uphold and proud to list behind my name.

2023 Featured Essay

Ina Biliunas, CMA (AAMA)

Lakeland Community College

A medical assistant is, “a person who under the direction of a qualified physician, performs a variety of routine administrative and clinical tasks in an office, hospital or other clinical facility.” Those duties seem very basic. To truly be an outstanding medical assistant, one needs to possess something extra and special. When you choose to be in the medical field, you want to have passion in helping patients. You need to be empathetic, precise, and to be able to simplify instructions to the patient for their treatment, diagnosis, medications, and procedures.

First, a medical assistant needs to be empathetic. A medical assistant is the first person a patient meets and discusses their complaint and reason for their visit. A patient’s first impression of the office is determined on how they are greeted by the medical assistant. A patient needs to feel that someone really cares, understands, and wants to help them with the care they need.

Second, a medical assistant needs to be well skilled and trained in performing vitals such as blood pressure, temperature, pulse, health histories, injections, and blood work. These tasks need to be accurate and precise, so that the provider can provide the best care needed for the patient. Inaccuracies may cause improper treatment to the patient, which may affect the care they receive from the provider.

Third, a medical assistant needs to be able to understand and explain medications, procedures, or treatment questions in a simple manner. From my experience, the patient sometimes leaves the office unclear of the next steps to their treatment. They have many questions about how and when to take their medications. By explaining these hard-to-understand instructions and questions, the medical assistant can put the patient at ease. The patient becomes more comfortable and can follow the next steps of their treatment plans.

To be a certified medical assistant is very important. The certification ensures that the medical assistant will be well skilled, trained and educated to provide the best patient care. A medical assistant will be confident in their duties. The standardized training enables the employer to receive a well skilled and trained medical assistant and the hiring process is more efficient. Patients put their trust in their providers and staff with their health. If you are not properly trained, this can endanger the patient.

On a personal note, I chose to be a medical assistant, because I always wanted to help people. I felt medical assisting would be a great place to start my career in a medical field. My life’s journey taught me which medical assistant qualities are important and how important a medical assistant is to the patient. The qualities of empathy, precision in skills and the ability to help patients understand technical health information are vital in being the best medical assistant. As I grow closer to my completion of my medical assisting certificate, I hope that I can achieve these goals and provide the best patient care.

Remi JeanMarie-Jennings

Wake Technical Community College (Perry Health Sciences Campus)

When I was a teenager, my friends would often refer to me as the “mom” of the group. I didn’t understand why they thought of me like this because teenagers often associate anything pertaining parents negatively. It wasn’t until when one of my friends made this comment that I asked her, “What teenage girl wants to be referred to as mom, and why do you guys think of me like *that*?” She looked at me and calmly replied, “You are nurturing...just like moms are.” I thought about her response and realized that my friends referred to me as “mom” because I possess nurturing traits. This conversation led me to reflect on myself and determine that personability, compassion, and patience are all traits that not only contribute to a nurturing individual but are also traits I embody. Ever since then, I have prided myself on these traits and have used them to cultivate a passion for medicine, which led me to the medical assisting profession.

I am currently in the second semester of my medical assisting program, and I exhibit these traits daily as I learn the clinical and administrative skills needed to provide quality care to patients. As a medical assistant, I believe being personable is a characteristic that will allow me to connect with patients and establish a good rapport with them. This is beneficial to both me and patients because they feel comfortable during the rooming process, which encourages them to provide detailed information about their chief complaint, medical history, and symptoms, assisting the provider in making an accurate diagnosis, creating an effective treatment plan, and providing an overall better care experience. In addition to being personable, being compassionate will help me become an exceptional medical assistant by showing patients kindness and my willingness to collaborate with others to provide them with quality care. Similarly, challenges can arise in the medical office like difficult patients, unexpected equipment failure, and scheduling errors. However, being patient displays my ability to endure these situations, react positively, and respond effectively. Patience can assist me in being an exceptional medical assistant and is an imperative skill to have when working in the medical field, especially when providing patient care.

I was fortunate this semester to be granted an internship at a medical office as a student medical assistant. Many of my preceptors are exemplary medical assistants who possess these traits and are credentialed. The two most common credentials for medical assistants are CMA (AAMA) and RMA (AMT). The CMA (AAMA) is awarded by the American Association of Medical Assistants and requires completion of an accredited postsecondary program. The RMA (AMT) is awarded by the American Medical Technologist. It is important for medical assistants to obtain credentials because it assures employers that we have acquired education from a program that provides quality clinical and administrative skills, in-depth knowledge of certain medical topics, and on-the-job training. After completion of my program, I plan on obtaining credentials and becoming an exceptional medical assistant!

Alexa Petroziello

The National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement

To be an attributing component in the health care community, we as medical assistants should carry several personality traits/ characteristics that will assist in making us proficient in our duties and skills to provide the best support to our providers/ team members and the best possible care for our patients. An individual's character plays a vital role in health care by influencing personal and professional values to make the most effective and contributing clinical decisions.

Acceptance is a powerful quality that teaches the importance of developing a positive, respectful, and empathetic relationship with team members and patients in all social situations. It is appreciating individuality, uniqueness, and humanity. Acceptance is a person's assent to the reality of a situation, recognizing a process or condition, possibly a negative or uncomfortable situation without attempting to change it or protest. As health care professionals we interact with a diverse patient population and community including peers and other health care staff. Promoting diversity is a value that has the potential to teach us to be accepting in many ways that include but are not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, etc. This characteristic may potentially help a patient of a diverse community experience a sense of safety, security, unsuspecting and confidence when sharing private personal information with health care professionals to treat or improve and maintain the quality care they receive.

Exhibiting extensive levels of transparency when working with individuals in a health care setting shows personal and professional integrity to form a foundation by ensuring trust between patients and health care professionals. Correlations between trust can affect health and wellness outcomes positively when patient confidentiality is taken into consideration and practiced appropriately. Transparency in healthcare promotes meaningful interactions and increases patient knowledge by fully disclosing essential details that must be addressed to benefit health, treatment, or management. Patients are the ultimate beneficiaries when a transparent relationship is established between themselves and the health care professionals they connect with.

Although knowledge and skill are extremely important, compassion is perhaps the most important quality a medical assistant can exhibit. Compassion refers to being sympathetically aware and empathetic of another person's suffering and the motivation we feel to help alleviate. The ability to genuinely empathize while maintaining professional drives better outcomes for patients by providing emotional support to help our patients feel valued and important, which in turn benefits mental and physical health. Compassion brings comfort and reassurance to patients to create the opportunity to improve their care by enhancing cooperation between patient action and steps taken to ensure health and wellness.

Obtaining a medical assisting credential shows dedication, professionalism, and proficiency. It helps demonstrate clinical skill, administrative knowledge, and a contemporary understanding of health care and wellness delivery.

I will continue to utilize the qualities above to ensure my future career as a medical assistant is accomplished and performed with honesty, equality, sympathy, and respect daily in and out of the clinic.

I very much appreciate the opportunity, Thank you!

2023 Featured Essay

Nina Velazquez

Wellspring School of Allied Health

Becoming a proficient medical assistant requires a unique blend of personal characteristics that go beyond technical skills. While knowledge and expertise are essential, three personal qualities are vital to excelling in this career.

Empathy: One of the most crucial characteristics for a medical assistant is empathy. In a healthcare setting, patients often arrive feeling vulnerable and anxious, seeking solace and reassurance. The ability to understand and share their feelings fosters trust and establishes a positive rapport. Compassionate care, demonstrated through active listening, and displaying genuine concern, can alleviate patients' fears and enhance their overall experience. Empathy allows medical assistants to address patients' emotional needs, ensuring they feel supported and valued, which ultimately contributes to better health outcomes.

Adaptability: Medical assistants work in dynamic and fast-paced environments that demand adaptability. Each day presents new challenges, ranging from sudden patient emergencies to unexpected changes in medical procedures. Being flexible and quick to adjust is essential in such scenarios. An adaptable medical assistant can navigate through changing priorities, multitask efficiently, and maintain composure under pressure. By embracing flexibility, they can provide seamless care, meet the diverse needs of patients, and contribute to a harmonious healthcare team.

Attention to Detail: In healthcare, the smallest details can have significant consequences. Medical assistants must possess a keen eye for detail to ensure accuracy and prevent errors. From recording patient information and medication dosages to preparing examination rooms, meticulousness is crucial at every step. Diligently following protocols and paying attention to even the minutest aspects help maintain patient safety and prevent potential complications. By being thorough, medical assistants can detect warning signs, identify inconsistencies, and communicate critical information to the healthcare team, thus facilitating better patient care.

Obtaining a medical assisting credential is vital for individuals aspiring to excel in their profession. Here are a few reasons why credentialing holds such significance:

Professional Credibility: Acquiring a medical assisting credential demonstrates a commitment to upholding the highest standards of practice and ensures employers and patients alike that one possesses the necessary knowledge and skills.

Patient Safety: Credentialing ensures that medical assistants have undergone standardized education and training, making them competent in performing their duties. This knowledge equips them to handle various medical procedures, administer medications safely, and recognize potential risks or complications promptly. By obtaining a credential, medical assistants contribute to maintaining patient safety and well-being.

Career Advancement: A medical assisting credential opens doors to numerous career opportunities. Many healthcare organizations prioritize hiring credentialed professionals, offering better job prospects. Additionally, a credential can serve as a foundation for specialization in areas such as phlebotomy, EKG, or medical billing and coding, providing avenues for professional growth and specialization.

By embodying these characteristics and pursuing credentialing, you too can contribute to the delivery of high-quality healthcare, positively impacting patients' lives and the overall efficiency of the health care system.