

Lifelong Learning

CMA (AAMA) Relishes a Career that Keeps Teaching New Skills



By Cathy Cassata

Fayth McKinney, CMA (AAMA), was working as a caregiver in 2012 when her husband passed away. “At the time, my daughter was 3 years old. I wanted to find consistent employment,” she says.

With 20 years of experience working in the health care field as a licensed nursing assistant and emergency medical technician and in roles related to trauma care and developmental disabilities, she wanted to shift gears.

“I learned about the medical assisting program at my local college and realized that some of the duties of a medical assistant are the things that I love to do and am good at, like caring for members of my community,” says McKinney. “I entered school with so much excitement and enthusiasm.”

After graduating and passing the CMA

(AAMA) Certification Exam in 2014, she was offered a short-term position to fill in during someone’s maternity leave at her externship site, a busy family practice. Before her time was up, she landed a permanent full-time position in women’s care at a clinic affiliated with her local hospital.

“I remember thinking I had a pretty good handle [on] the issues surrounding women’s care and practices of my new specialty, but boy, was I wrong. I had a lot to learn about both gynecological and obstetrical needs,” says McKinney.

The clinic provides women with care including Papanicolaou tests (i.e., Pap smears), birth control, pregnancy, menopause, and cervical health procedures such as endometrial biopsies, colposcopies, and loop electrosurgical excision procedures. She is in the room when a male physician treats patients, sometimes assisting with procedures or documenting health information. She also stocks immunizations, gathers supplies for procedures, ensures patients sign consent forms, and manages the daily schedule.

McKinney believes the care they provide at the clinic helps improve women’s lives. “Handing out birth control is important

to me because it’s helpful to people and important to them,” she says.

The clinic also works with women who choose to have a midwife during their pregnancy. For these patients, McKinney assists with check-ins and ensures that patients have their laboratory tests processed and their glucose checked.

Getting to interact with obstetrics patients is her favorite part of the job. “I’ve been here over 10 years now, and so many of the patients have babies [at our practice]. It’s great when they come back and have that second or third baby,” says McKinney. “We’re a small town, and it’s a nice feeling to know patients. It can be [a] little sad when they are gone after their six-week follow-up.”

Despite working at the clinic for a decade, she continues to learn something new every day. “I think my longevity attests to how much I love my profession and my commitment to quality care that patients receive here,” says McKinney.

While she worked in the health care field in different ways throughout her life, she says life circumstances brought her to exactly the right place: “I feel as [if] I have found my niche in life and work and am where I am meant to be.” ♦