

Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program

Frequently Asked Questions – as of April 25, 2025

1. What is the Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program?

The Medical Assistant (MA) Apprenticeship Program is a career advancement opportunity for UMass Memorial Health caregivers to become trained certified medical assistants. The program is a collaboration with the SHARE union, Health Careers Advancement Program (HCAP) and Quinsigamond Community College. The college will support our caregivers in receiving the education and on-the-job training needed to succeed as an entry-level certified medical assistant. Apprentices will receive support throughout the program. In exchange and upon completion of the registered apprenticeship program, caregivers will make a one (1) year commitment to working as a medical assistant at UMMH.

2. What is a Medical Assistant?

Medical Assistants work as a team with the provider to ensure patients' needs are met. Medical Assistants will perform varying duties depending on the specialty of the practice. Some of them include:

- Providing patient care by assisting with the implementation of care plans.
- Taking and recording vital signs such as blood pressure, temperature, height, weight, etc.
- Drawing blood
- Communicating patients' needs and concerns to the provider
- Performing EKGs as ordered
- Preparing and assisting physicians and other licensed providers with clinical procedures
- Administrative tasks to support office functions

3. Do medical assistants handle bodily waste (e.g. feces, urine, etc.)?

Yes, medical assistants may handle bodily waste as part of their duties, depending on the specific job setting. However, handling bodily waste is done with strict adherence to safety and hygiene standards to minimize exposure to contaminants.

4. How does the program work?

The MA Apprenticeship is a full-time, immersive training program that combines classroom and clinical instruction, designed to prepare caregivers for placement in an MA role. Caregivers selected for the program will transfer into an MA I position, where they will remain until they pass the certification exam. After completing their training, apprentices will continue working full-time in their Medical Assistant roles at the selected UMMH Ambulatory or Community Medical Group location, receiving ongoing on-the-job training as they prepare for the national certification exam. Upon certification, caregivers will advance to an MA II position and receive a wage increase.

5. What are the steps in the application process?

Caregivers will complete the following steps:

1. Complete Online Interest Form
2. Sign-up for and Attend an Information Session
3. Signup and Complete the WorkKeys career assessment
4. Complete Apprenticeship application, including a one-page personal statement, resume, and clinical interest questionnaire
5. Interview with Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Screening Panel
6. Conduct a Job shadow
7. If selected, Interview with Hiring Managers

6. Is English proficiency a requirement for becoming a MA?

Yes, English proficiency is a requirement for the MA position. Caregivers will complete the WorkKeys assessment to determine English proficiency levels. If you do not qualify due to English language proficiency concerns, you are not able to continue the screening process. You may, however, be eligible to participate in the new UMass Memorial Workplace English course. For additional information on Workplace English visit the [Hub](#).

7. What is the WorkKeys career assessment?

The WorkKeys career assessment measures foundation skills required to be successful as a medical assistant. Quinsigamond Community College will administer the WorkKeys assessment. The assessment can be taken online and can take up to two (2) hours to complete. The assessment focuses on applied math and understanding written text. Caregivers will have access to practice tests.

8. If I have already taken WorkKeys career assessment, do I need to retake it again?

If you previously attempted to apply for the UMass Memorial Health Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program for Winter 2025 and completed the WorkKeys Assessment with a score of 5 or higher, you will not need to retake the assessment.

9. What are the required WorkKeys assessment scores needed to progress in the application process?

If you score a 4 or lower, Quinsigamond Community College (QCC) will reach out to discuss your results and explore your options. Achieving a score of 5 or above ensures you meet the program's requirements and can proceed in the application process. In both cases, Quinsigamond Community College will be in touch with caregivers who have taken both WorkKeys assessments.

10. If I am already in college, does my math and English placement from that college count?

Unfortunately, no. You will still need to complete the WorkKeys assessments.

11. If I am accepted into the program, will the credits have earned transfer to future coursework, such as nursing?

Quinsigamond Community College is actively exploring transfer options for this program. However, at this time, the program is non-credit and does not directly transfer to future coursework, such as nursing.

12. Is it mandatory to attend an information session?

Yes, caregivers must attend an information session. We will offer virtual and in-person information sessions. If you are having trouble scheduling an information session, please email mydevelopment@umassmemorial.org.

13. What will I learn from the information sessions?

The information session will provide you with all the details about the MA program. You will learn about the eligibility requirements and what to expect from our partners at Quinsigamond Community College. You will also learn about the daily tasks of MA and how they contribute to the delivery of quality patient care at UMass Memorial Health.

14. Will participants earn a salary if they enroll in the MA Apprenticeship Program?

Yes, the MA apprenticeship program is an "earn and learn" program that allows caregivers to earn a salary while learning new skills. Selected employees will transfer into an MA I position and will remain in that position while they attend classroom education and clinical training. Caregivers will then work full time in their MA I position and remain in that position until they pass the certification exam. UMass Memorial will also cover all tuition and fees related to the program. Upon certification, caregivers will advance to the MA II role and receive a wage increase.

15. When does the program start?

- Cohort 3 start date: Program starts September 15, 2025. Deadline to apply is July 14, 2025.

16. How many caregivers can participate?

UMMH will select a maximum of 15 caregivers for Fall 2025 cohort to participate in the Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program.

17. Who are the education and technical skill providers?

Quinsigamond Community College will provide the program's training instruction and assessment and coaching throughout the program.

18. How long is the program?

The registered apprenticeship program is 2000 hours, or approximately one year. A breakdown of the program hours includes:

- Approximately 160 hours of classroom and clinical training will occur at Quinsigamond Community College downtown Worcester campus and UMMH Ambulatory or CMG site, Monday through Friday, full time between 8- 4:30 or 9- 5pm.
- Hands on clinical training at an UMMH primary care or specialty medical office practices
- On the job training with 1:1 preceptor support
- Preparation time to sit for the National Health Career Association (NHA) Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) national examination. NOTE: The caregiver must pass the certification exam during the apprenticeship or 12 months from completing the QCC training

19. Who is eligible to apply for the program?

To be eligible for the MA program caregivers must meet the following criteria:

- All UMass Memorial Health's full-time and part-time caregivers are employed for 6 months or more. Per diems and contractors are not eligible.
- Caregivers must be in good standing with UMass Memorial Health at the time their application is submitted. Those with written warnings and final written warnings within the last twelve (12) months will not be eligible to apply.
- Complete an interest form, attend an informational session and undergo assessment.
- Make a commitment to the time and the effort to complete all training requirements
- Have basic math and intermediate English language proficiency
- Ability to attend class Monday–Friday eight hours/day at QCC for 8 weeks
- Willing to make a work commitment to UMass Memorial Health for one year following successful completion of apprenticeship.
- No physical restrictions (able to lift, pull, bend, dexterity in hands etc. without assistance)
- Complete training satisfactorily according to quality and safety standards.

20. What is required to apply?

- High School Diploma, GED or HiSET. A copy of your official high school transcript or GED record
- Personal statement – Provide a 2-3 paragraph written statement that describes why you would like to be a medical assistant. Describe your personal qualities or traits and experience that will make you a good fit for the position.
- Resume - Updated with your current job
- Interest Questionnaire
- WorkKeys Careers Assessment scores

21. If I apply to the program, will my current manager be notified?

When you apply to the program, your current manager will be notified via email and asked to complete a recommendation form. This form will then be included as part of your overall application.

22. How does UMass Memorial support participants in this program?

UMass Memorial offers a range of support including:

- Paying upfront tuition and fees for the training program.
- Providing benefits during training
- Working 1:1 with a trained medical assistant preceptor
- Assistance from the MA educator and/or the workforce development team with any challenges.
- Support for a caregiver if it is determined the apprenticeship program is not a good fit

23. What happens if a caregiver decides that the MA I role is not the right fit?

The goal is to retain every UMass Memorial caregiver. Caregivers who leave the program after being selected and participating will receive support to return to their previous position or secure another position. UMass Memorial Health's talent acquisition and workforce development teams, in partnership with union representatives will work together to identify opportunities. If a caregiver's previous job is not available, they will receive up to four weeks of pay while they engage in an active job search. Caregivers are permitted to use accrued but unused PTO if they still have not found a position within four weeks.

24. What happens if a hiring manager decides that the MA I role is not the right fit?

Our goal is to help you grow your career and to retain you as a caregiver at UMass Memorial. Talent acquisition, and workforce development will work with you to locate another opportunity if you must step out of the MA program. See answers to questions 15 and 16 for more specifics.

25. Are there any commitments post training for caregivers?

Yes, all caregivers are expected to work as a MA for one year at UMass Memorial Health upon completion of the program. If you do not maintain employment in this role for at least 12 months, you may be asked to pay back the cost of the medical assistant education program.

26. What is the starting salary for MA I at UMass Memorial?

The starting wage for MA I is \$19.97/hour and MA II with certification is \$21.29. A caregiver's experience may result in a higher starting rate.

27. How does a MA I advance to a MA II?

The MA II position requires certification. Apprentices in a MA I position will have a maximum of 12 months to prepare and complete the certification exam. Basic Life Support or Heart Saver certification must be current. Once certification is obtained, a caregiver will advance to the MA II position and receive a wage increase.

28. Will accommodation be made for individuals with disabilities?

If an individual requests accommodation in the context of a workforce development program, we will work with our education partners to provide reasonable accommodation, if available, so the individual may participate in the program.

29. What union represents the MA job title?

The SHARE Union represents some MAs, while other MA positions are non-union. If you would like to know more about the SHARE Union, please visit their website at <https://www.theshareunion.org/> or speak with a SHARE organizer.

30. If a caregiver is coming from a job title outside of the SHARE union, will they lose their seniority by becoming a MA in the SHARE union?

Except in limited circumstances, the SHARE union recognizes time served by caregivers at UMass Memorial in positions outside of the SHARE union for purposes of seniority.

31. Will I be eligible for tuition assistance?

Tuition, books, and fees will be paid upfront by UMass Memorial Health program. Caregivers will not be eligible for additional tuition assistance during that same calendar year. There are no tax implications to the caregiver.

32. What if I am already participating in the student loan and education assistant program?

You may currently participate in the student loan and education assistant program if you are taking a class and have requested tuition reimbursement OR are receiving a loan repayment. However, you cannot be enrolled in additional coursework at the start of the apprenticeship program. If you are accepted into the program, you will not be eligible to access the student loan and education assistant program while participating in the registered apprenticeship program.

33. What does making a commitment mean?

Caregivers are making a commitment to UMMH to be present, accountable, reliable, and dependable and meet all requirements of both school and work. In exchange for being accepted into the Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program, caregivers will need to commit to UMMH for 1 year of continued employment as a medical assistant after the apprenticeship ends.

34. If I am accepted into the program, can I continue working in my current department while participating?

The program is full-time and requires caregivers to dedicate their time and attention during the 7-8 weeks of classroom and clinical training. Once you transition to full-time work at your clinical site, there may be an opportunity to pick up additional hours in your previous department. However, this would depend on meeting specific requirements and receiving prior approval.

35. What is the cost of the National Healthcareer Association's exam, the required passing scores and first-time pass rates?

The cost of the exam is \$160. Scores range from 200 to 500, with 500 being the highest. Students have to score 390, which is 78%, to pass. QCC's 1st time pass rate is 90%.

36. I am currently on an approved intermittent leave. How could this affect my eligibility for the program?

All caregivers who meet the program entrance requirements, including WorkKeys assessment scores, QCC intake interview and holding a budgeted position of 40 hours per week, will be invited to submit an application to the program. Generally, QCC can accommodate students who take up to but no more than 2 days of PTO/leave during the 8-week didactic and clinical portion of the program. If your intermittent leave requires you to miss more than this, you may not be eligible for the program at this time. If, once in the program, you or a covered family member develop a condition that requires you to take intermittent leave, the Program will accommodate your leave to the extent it can. For the time period in which you require intermittent leave should the leave interfere with program curriculum, this may require extending the time you have to complete the program, moving back to your former position if available or helping you to find a similar position.

Below are questions applicable to caregivers engaged in the interview process with hiring managers.

37. How are candidates chosen to interview with specific clinical site(s)?

Our matching process includes reviewing each candidate's interest questionnaire form results, comments made during the screening process, and the requirements of the different clinical locations.

38. What if I don't want to interview with any of the clinical sites I am being encouraged to

interview with?

Candidates have the option to decline interviews with the clinical sites they are being encouraged to interview with. If you choose not to move forward with the recommended sites, please notify Talent Acquisition so we can document your decision and explore whether you would like to move forward with applying for a spot for cohort #3 or would like to reapply for cohort #4.

39. How many sites can I interview with?

Each candidate will interview with at least 2 sites.

40. What if I am recommended to interview with a site but want to interview at another site on the list?

If you are recommended to interview with a specific site but wish to interview at another site on the list, please notify our Talent Acquisition team before the interviews for the recommended site are scheduled. We will review your qualifications and interest to assess if they align with the needs of that location and determine if an interview can be arranged.

41. What if I am not selected after interviewing with one or both sites?

This is a competitive process, and you can reapply for the next cohort.

42. What if I interview at a site, and it doesn't seem like a good fit for me?

This is a competitive process, and our hiring managers make the final decision. If there is not a good fit for our current open positions, you can apply for the next cohort.

43. What happens if I am hired at a site, but it doesn't feel like a good cultural fit? Or is the Medical Assistant role isn't what I expected?

We want caregivers to be successful and will work with each person to troubleshoot any challenges or issues. If the medical assistant role is not a fit, the caregiver stop-out agreement will be enacted while in training. Also, the 6-month transfer period applies during the Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program and begins after you complete your training at Quinsigamond Community College.