

**Docket Item:**

Community College Approval: Mt. Hood Community College, Certificate of Completion in Medical Assistant, within 51.0801-Medical/Clinical Assistant.

**Summary:**

Mt. Hood Community College proposes a new Certificate of Completion in Medical Assistant. Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) staff completed a review of the proposed certificate. After analysis, HECC staff recommends approval of the certificate as proposed.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The HECC recommends the adoption of the following resolution:  
RESOLVED, that the Higher Education Coordinating Commission approve the following certificate: Certificate of Completion in Medical Assistant.



**Mt. Hood Community College seeks the Oregon Higher Education Coordinating Commission's approval to offer an instructional program leading to Certificate of Completion in Medical Assistant.**

**Program Summary:**

In response to the growing need for medical assistants, the MHCC Health Professions Division is proposing to start a one-year Medical Assistant Certificate program. The goal of the program would be to prepare the student with the entry-level knowledge and skills needed to work in a medical clinic and to be eligible to sit for the Certified Medical Assistant Exam offered by the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA). With this certification the student would have the qualifications to work as a certified medical assistant in any state. The practice of Medical Assisting directly influences the public's health and well-being, and requires mastery of a complex body of knowledge and specialized skills requiring both formal education and practical experiences that serve as standards for entry into the profession.

**Program Catalog Description**

A medical assistant is an allied health professional that supports the services and care provided to patients in a variety of healthcare settings. They perform routine clinical and administrative tasks under the direct supervision of a physician or health care professionals. They are an important part of the healthcare team, they are directly involved with patient care, education, and diagnostic procedure as well as the functional operations of the clinic. The medical assistant program will provide the student with a complex body of knowledge, specialized skills and practical experiences that is needed by a medical assistant to meet the standards for entry into the profession.

**1. *Describe the need for this program by providing clear evidence.***

With the passing of the Affordable Care Act an increasing number of participants are enrolling for healthcare services with the emphasis shifting from acute care to primary preventative healthcare. This movement has resulted in a need for an increased number of group practices, clinics, and other ambulatory healthcare facilities with an additional need for support staff, particularly medical assistants. Medical assistants work mostly in primary care settings, a steadily growing sector of the healthcare industry. They provide administrative services which may include scheduling appointments, maintaining medical records, billing, and coding information for insurance purposes and clinical duties including taking and recording vital signs and medical histories, preparing patients for examination, drawing blood, and administering medications as directed by a physician. The need for more medical assistants will continue to increase as the number of individuals seeking healthcare services increase and the healthcare industry works to meet the demand. The Bureau of Labor Statistics: Occupation Outlook Handbook 2015 reports: "Employment of medical assistants is projected to grow 23 percent from 2014 to 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations. The growth of the aging baby-boom population will continue to increase demand for preventive medical services, which are often provided by physicians. As their practices expand, physicians will hire more assistants to perform routine administrative and clinical duties, allowing the physicians to see more patients."

Quick Facts: Medical Assistants  
2015 Median Pay \$30,590 per year  
\$14.71 per hour

Typical Entry Level Education	Postsecondary non-degree award
Number of Jobs, 2014	601, 24000
Job Outlook, 2014-24	23% (Much faster growth than the average 7%)
Employment change 2014-2024	138,900

“Employment in this occupation in 2014 was much larger than the statewide average for all occupations. The total number of job openings is projected to be much higher than the statewide average number of job openings for all occupations through 2024. This occupation is expected to grow at a much faster rate than the statewide average growth rate for all occupations through 2024. Reasonable employment opportunities exist largely due to the significant number of job openings projected for this occupation.” Statics from the Oregon Employment Department: listed 207 job openings for medical assistant on November 21, 2016. Local Agency Needs. The Advisory Committee for the proposed Medical Assistant program at MHCC strongly supported MHCC’s proposal to open a one-year certificate program. They reported there is a need for medical assistants across the state.

**2. *Does the community college utilize systemic methods for meaningful and ongoing involvement of the appropriate constituencies?***

This program has been created in collaboration with MHCC’s office of instruction, the Dean of Health Professions, the college wide curriculum committee and Health Professions/ Nursing faculty on campus. Externally we have relied on input from our advisory committee that consisted of members from private industry as well as public institutions that employ medical assistants. The advisory committee first met in April 2016 to provide feedback and insight into current industry needs and desired skills and individual members have continued to provide input into the development of the program curriculum and objectives... Selected advisory board members will be invited to participate in bi-annual meetings for updates on community needs and suggestions for the program as the college moves forward with the medical assistant program. In spring 2016, local community health organizations and clinic personnel attended an Advisory Committee meeting for the proposed Medical Assistant program at Mt Hood community College (MHCC). They reported there is a great need for medical assistants across the state with the greatest need in the Portland Metropolitan area giving strong support MHCC’s proposal to open a medical assistant program. Large healthcare organizations as well as smaller clinics were represented; Kaiser Permanente, Providence Health & Services, Legacy Medical Center, Oregon Health & Science University, and the Veterans Administration clinics. All represented groups reported they had many medical assistant positions open with many going unfilled. The smaller clinics reported similar needs. They reported the present regional programs cannot meet the needs of the community and urged MHCC to continue in our efforts to establish a Medical Assistant program.

**3. *Is the community college program aligned with appropriate education, workforce development, and economic development programs?***

One of the goals of Workforce is to meet the needs of the community partners for workers as well as meet the needs of the students to provide them with the

opportunity to acquire the skills and foundational knowledge they need to work in the healthcare system. Working as a medical assistant with the skills and knowledge to provide services to patients and support to other healthcare providers will provide the student many learning opportunities and experiences that may lead to a desire to advance their careers and seek further education that will enhance their professional career to a higher level in the medical or management field. The Bureau of Labor predicts there will be a 23% increase in demand for Medical Assistants by the year 2024. This certificate is being offered to provide the student with the opportunity to be job ready as well as meet the needs of the community. The proposed Medical Assistant Certificate program aligns with current Board goals of transforming lives and serving the community. Students completing the program will be prepared to enter the workforce at an entry level medical profession. The curriculum was designed to provide the students with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the needs of the community in the healthcare setting. Special attention was taken to ensure that level of education and learning outcomes are clearly defined for this program as well as within each course. These outcomes will align with the requirements for success in both employment and further education.

4. ***Does the community college program lead to student achievement of academic and technical knowledge, skills, and related proficiencies?***

The program will prepare students with the skills needed to work in ambulatory healthcare settings. Upon completion they will be able to perform front office administrative procedures as well as back office clinical procedures providing direct patient care and supportive assistant to the healthcare provider. The successful student will possess skills in high demand by local and national healthcare employers. This program is designed to provide the student with the necessary skills and knowledge to enter the workforce as a medical assistant as well as providing a foundation on which they can build their healthcare career. This is a beginning of a career pathway for the student to continue their educational endeavors to advance their career to a higher level medical profession. Their career pathway may lead them, into nursing, medical office management, mental health counselor, medical informatics, to name a few, the opportunities for advancement is there if they wish to move forward with their education.

5. ***Does the community college identify and have the resources to develop, implement, and sustain the program?***

MHCC has approved the funding through the general college budget and Mt Hood College Foundation funds. There will be substantial equipment costs in the development of the program, these will be covered by the college general budget, community clinical partners and Perkins funds. The program will admit 24 students yearly and the final term's lab fees will cover the cost of the national certifying exam.

***Assurances***

Mt. Hood Community College has met or will meet the four institutional assurances required for program application.

1. ***Access.*** The college and program will affirmatively provide access, accommodations, flexibility, and additional/supplemental services for special populations and protected

classes of students.

2. *Continuous Improvement.* The college has assessment, evaluation, feedback, and continuous improvement processes or systems in place. For the proposed program, there will be opportunities for input from and concerning the instructor(s), students, employers, and other partners/stakeholders. Program need and labor market information will be periodically re-evaluated and changes will be requested as needed.
3. *Adverse impact and detrimental duplication.* The college will follow all current laws, rules, and procedures and has made good faith efforts to avoid or resolve adverse *intersegmental* and *intra-segmental* impact and detrimental duplication problems with other relevant programs or institutions.
4. *Program records maintenance and congruence.* The college acknowledges that the records concerning the program title, curriculum, CIP code, credit hours, etc. maintained by the Office are the official records and it is the college's responsibility to keep their records aligned with those of the Office. The college will not make changes to the program without informing and/or receiving approval from the Office.