

# HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## MEDICAL ASSISTANT CERTIFICATE



## 2019-20 PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Please note that this handbook is designed to clarify aspects and policies associated with the Medical Assistant Certificate Program at HCC. As this includes hands-on healthcare coursework, state and national guidelines and laws require Holyoke Community College to ensure the safety of our students and the safety of the patients with whom we work. This handbook is a supplement to your course instructor's syllabus. The syllabus will contain all the specific details pertinent to each instructor's specific class. The student is responsible for reading and understanding both documents. It is the student's responsibility to ask clarifying questions if anything is unclear prior to signing the statement of understanding.

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## WELCOME TO THE MEDICAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM

Welcome to Holyoke Community College and the Medical Assistant Program!

This program prepares you for an entry-level Medical Assistant career. Medical Assistant employment opportunities are steadily increasing and provide opportunities for well-educated and well-trained individuals.

Holyoke Community College prides itself on the excellent reputation of its Medical Assistant students and past graduates. We are eager to add you to our list of graduates.

As students, you are expected to attend classes and labs, keep up with assignments, and demonstrate professionalism. Responsibility, motivation, and enthusiasm are important characteristics needed to gain knowledge and skill development. It is expected that each student display these attributes at all times. Honesty is a quality required in all classroom and clinical activities. You must be trustworthy to be a Medical Assistant. You are expected to represent Holyoke Community College in a professional manner during all meetings, clinical experiences, and classroom activities.

If there is anything that the faculty and staff can do to help you achieve your goals, please let us know. When you are successful, we are successful!

### Medical Assistant Certificate Program:

#### Course schedule (subject to modification):

Classes are taken as follows to ensure the student receives a full understanding of concepts in relationship to the various courses and their application to the medical field.

#### Semester One:

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| HTH 114 | Medical Terminology (if not already taken)              |
| HMC 103 | Introduction to Health Care Management                  |
| HMC 104 | Health Insurance Reimbursement and Computerized Billing |
| HMC 107 | Human Anatomy, Physiology & Disease Processes           |

#### Semester Two:

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| MEA 110 | Introduction to Medical Assisting         |
| MEA 125 | Clinical Skills I - Electrocardiography   |
| MEA 108 | Clinical Skills II - Phlebotomy           |
| MEA 210 | Clinical Skills III - Clinical Techniques |
| MEA 150 | Introduction to Drug Therapy              |
| HTH 220 | Medical Law and Ethics                    |

#### Semester Three:

|         |                     |
|---------|---------------------|
| MEA 225 | Career Development* |
|---------|---------------------|

\*MEA 225 needs to be taken in the summer immediately following MEA 210. If there are conditions with prohibit that, MEA 225 may be taken the following fall, with permission from the certificate coordinator and the Dean of Health Sciences. If MEA 225 is not completed in this time frame, the student will need to repeat MEA 125, 108, and 210 before they can enroll in MEA 225.

### **ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

HCC is committed to full inclusion of all students. Students with a documented disability should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities and Deaf Services at 413-552-2417 or 413-650-5502 (Video Phone for Deaf/Hard-of-hearing students) to request an intake appointment and discuss accommodations. Collaboration between students, OSDDS, and instructors is essential for timely accommodations. Students are urged to provide their accommodation agreement to instructors in the first week of the term or immediately after receiving the approved accommodation from OSDDS.

### **CPR CERTIFICATION**

Although not embedded in the program coursework, students are required to have an active CPR/AED certification to enroll in MEA 225 and it must remain active (not expire) during the duration of the course. The certification must be a BLS Provider certification from the American Heart Association. HCC offers several opportunities to complete this course on campus during the academic year. The current (2018) cost is approximately \$60.00 and is an “out of pocket” expense, not included in the stated course tuition or fees.

### **EQUIPMENT/UNIFORMS:**

Students will need to purchase a watch with a second hand for MEA 210 and scrubs to wear in all of their clinical classes (MEA 125, 108, and 210). Scrubs can be any color. The Uniform Shop, with locations in Northampton and Holyoke, and Walmart all carry scrubs at reasonable prices. The course instructor for MEA 210 will provide you with information about the specifications needed.

## MEDICAL ASSISTANT ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The following Essential Functions are necessary to successfully complete the Medical Assistant Certificate. In some cases, developmental courses may help students meet academic standards. The functional abilities below may be performed with reasonable accommodation. This information is provided to allow the student to assess his or her own capabilities.

To ensure patient safety, students throughout the course must be able to demonstrate the following Essential Functions:

### 1. Physical

- **Mobility-** Abilities sufficient to move quickly from place to place and maneuver in small spaces. Tolerance for walking, standing, stooping, and bending. May need to maintain awkward positions for prolonged time.
- **Hearing-** Recognize and respond to instruments, equipment and assess patient needs; monitor warnings or procedure termination signals.
- **Vision-** Ability sufficient to monitor equipment and assess patient needs. Observe patient responses. Read gauges and instrument printouts accurately. Discern variations in color and intensity.
- **Touch-** Tactile ability sufficient for physical assessment. Palpate for veins with gloves on. Palpate for pulses.
- **Motor Skills-** gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective patient care. Use hands and arms in handling, installing, positioning, and moving materials, and manipulating items found in a healthcare setting. Calibrate and use equipment. Manipulate small specimen collection.

### 2. Communication

- **Knowledge** of the structure and content of the English language.
- **Active listening-** giving full attention to what others are saying, taking time to understand the points being made.
- **Oral comprehension-** the ability to listen and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
- **Speech clarity-** the ability to speak clearly so others can understand you.
- **Speech recognition-** the ability to identify and understand the speech of another person.
- **Written expression-** the ability to communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand, including medical terminology. Please note: It is suggested that you keep the text you use in HTH 114 (Medical Terminology) as a reference book.
- **Communicating with others-** providing information to supervisors, co-workers, and nurses, in written form, e-mail, and in person.
- **Interacting with computers-** using computers and computer systems including hardware and software.

- **Civility**- polite, respectful, and professional behavior exhibited in classroom, laboratory, and clinical setting at all times.

### 3. Cognitive

- **Ability to read and understand** complex instructions, manipulate locks on equipment, manipulate alarms and high-tech medical devices. Follow isolation procedures, understand and demonstrate complex multi-step procedures.
- **Problem sensitivity**- the ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong and act quickly to address the problem.
- **Information processing**- Ability to receive information from multiple sources, make timely decisions, and respond to those needs quickly, safely, and professionally. For example, the ability to receive information and act quickly to maintain patient safety and security when multiple patients express competing needs.
- **Control precision**- the ability to quickly and repeatedly adjust the controls of a machine or a vehicle to exact positions
- **Clinical information gathering and reporting**- understand and fulfill role regarding: gathering, analyzing, and reporting findings to instructors and appropriate healthcare providers. Such interactions may include: measuring and reporting vital signs, height, weight, etc.

### 4. Emotional

- **Dependability**- requires being reliable, responsible, and dependable, and fulfilling role obligations.
- **Integrity**- requires being honest and ethical.
- **Cooperation**- requires being pleasant with others, displaying a good-natured, cooperative attitude.
- **Self-Control**- requires maintaining composure, keeping emotions in check, controlling anger, and avoiding aggressive behavior at all times, even in very difficult or very stressful situations.
- **Concern for others**- requires being sensitive to others' needs and feelings.
- **Initiative**- requires a willingness to take on responsibilities and challenges.
- **Stress tolerance**- requires accepting criticism and dealing calmly and effectively with high stress situations.
- **Adaptability/Flexibility**- requires being open to change and to considerable variety in the workplace.

(Definitions above **adapted** from Holyoke Community College's Nursing and Radiologic Technology Student Handbooks, 2016-2017. Physical Functions gathered from Internet search, "Medical Assistant essential functions").

**Important Note:** Current students must continue to meet course Essential Functions throughout the program. Students who are no longer able to meet the standards must notify their course instructor, certificate coordinator, or department chair/dean as soon as possible. If a student's inability to satisfy an Essential Function is of a temporary nature, every reasonable effort will be made to provide the opportunity for satisfactory completion of the curriculum. In some cases, this may require students to extend their plans of study. If a student is injured, becomes ill, or encounters any situation that changes his or her ability to meet the Essential

Functions, the Dean of Health Sciences will require health care provider verification of the student's continued ability to meet the stated Essential Functions.

## **AMERICAN MEDICAL TECHNOLOGISTS (AMT) STANDARDS OF PRACTICE**

American Medical Technologists (AMT) is a national agency that certifies seven primary designations of healthcare personnel: medical technologists, medical laboratory technicians, office laboratory technicians, medical assistants, phlebotomy technicians, dental assistants and medical office administrative specialists. The organization's purpose is to help protect the welfare of the public by maintaining competency standards in these occupations.  
([https://india.pearsonvue.com/Clients/American-Medical-Technologists-\(AMT\).aspx](https://india.pearsonvue.com/Clients/American-Medical-Technologists-(AMT).aspx))

AMT seeks to encourage, establish, and maintain the highest standards, traditions and principles of the practices, which constitute the profession of the Registry. Members of the AMT Registry must recognize their responsibilities, not only to their patients, but also to society, to other health care professionals, and to themselves. The following standards of practice are principles adopted by the AMT Board of Directors, which define the essence of honorable and ethical behavior for a health care professional:

1. While engaged in the Arts and Sciences, which constitute the practice of their profession, AMT professionals shall be dedicated to the provision of competent service.
2. The AMT professional shall place the welfare of the patient above all else.
3. The AMT professional understands the importance of thoroughness in the performance of duty, compassion with patients, and the importance of the tasks, which may be performed.
4. The AMT professional shall always seek to respect the rights of patients and of health care providers, and shall safeguard patient confidences.
5. The AMT professional will strive to increase his/her technical knowledge and shall continue to study, and apply scientific advancement in his/her specialty.
6. The AMT professional shall respect the law and will pledge to avoid dishonest, unethical or illegal practices.
7. The AMT professional understands that he/she is not to make or offer a diagnosis or interpretation unless he/she is a duly licensed physician/dentist or unless asked by the attending physician/dentist.
8. The AMT professional shall protect and value the judgment of the attending physician or dentist, providing this does not conflict with the behavior necessary to carry out Standard Number 2 above.
9. The AMT professional recognizes that any personal wrongdoing is his/her responsibility. It is also the professional health care provider's obligation to report to the proper authorities any knowledge of professional abuse.

10. The AMT professional pledges personal honor and integrity to cooperate in the advancement and expansion, by every lawful means, of American Medical Technologists.

The American Medical Technologists organization can be contacted at [www.americanmedtech.org](http://www.americanmedtech.org).

## **PROGRAM OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of all program requirements, graduates will be able to:

1. Practice medical assisting according to AMT Code of Ethics.
  - a) Function within the legal and ethical standards as a Medical Assistant within the medical profession.
2. Demonstrate caring and respectful communication as a Medical Assistant.
  - a) Function as a multi-skilled health worker in ambulatory settings such as medical offices and clinics.
  - b) Incorporate critical thinking in practice as a Medical Assistant.
  - c) Communicate effectively with clients from diverse backgrounds
  - d) Practice Medical Assisting collaboratively.
3. Demonstrate competence in administrative duties as a Medical Assistant.
  - a) Perform front office duties such as reception, transcription, insurance monitoring, record maintenance and bookkeeping.
4. Demonstrate competence in clinical duties as a Medical Assistant.
  - a) Perform vital signs, exam room preparation, patient data collection, simple dressing changes, lab tests, phlebotomy, medication administration and ECG's.
  - b) Demonstrate standard safety practices and procedures as a Medical Assistant.

**Upon successful completion of the American Medical Technologists exam for medical assisting, your credential will be Registered Medical Assistant (RMA).**

## **ATTENDANCE**

As a general policy, attendance is mandatory to all classroom and clinical class meetings. Any absence, unless determined to be “excused absences,” will negatively impact the student’s overall course grade. Refer to your course instructor’s syllabus for instructor-specific details about excused absences and specific attendance parameters (such as tardiness).

## **ADVERSE WEATHER POLICY**

The courses in the Medical Assisting Certificate program follow the college policy with regard to school delays and closures due to inclement weather for classroom meetings. In the event of a cancellation of the college, announcements are made over the radio and local television stations, announcements are made via HCC’s RAVE alert system, and also indicated on the college’s website. Students may also call 413-552-2900 x1418 to inquire about the college’s status. All on-campus classes are cancelled if the college is closed due to inclement weather or other emergency. If the college is functioning on a delayed schedule, the individual course instructor will make the determination regarding the class meeting that day/evening. If in doubt, students are encouraged to contact their course instructor directly.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

Holyoke Community College is committed to academic integrity--the honest, authentic and independent pursuit of knowledge. As members of the academic community, students are expected to be responsible for all of their own academic work without dishonesty or deception; joint work is legitimate only when assigned or approved by the instructor. HCC faculty members will take reasonable precautions to eliminate opportunities for academic dishonesty.

It is expected that all students in the Medical Assisting Certificate Program will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy which can be found in detail on page 37 of the most current published form of the HCC Student Handbook 2018-19.

[http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student\\_Handbook\\_2018-2019\\_m-3.pdf](http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student_Handbook_2018-2019_m-3.pdf)).

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY**

The Medical Assistant Certificate Program will follow the college’s policy prohibiting the illegal possession, use, or distribution of drugs and/or alcohol by students on college property (class) or as part of any college activity (externship). It is expected that all students in the Medical Assisting Certificate Program will adhere to the Substance Abuse Prevention Policy in its entirety which can be found in detail on pages 56-58 of the most current published form of the HCC Student Handbook 2018-19.

[http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student\\_Handbook\\_2018-2019\\_m-3.pdf](http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student_Handbook_2018-2019_m-3.pdf)).

## CLINICAL DRESS CODE

Students are expected to come prepared to the clinical area. Variations in clinical requirements will be explained by each clinical instructor. Students will wear the designated uniforms during clinical assignments adhering to the following dress code. **Please note that these are the requirements for your clinical classes: MEA 125, MEA 108, MEA 210. There may be variations to these requirements for MEA 225 (externship) based on clinical site placement.**

- UNIFORMS: Scrubs (any plain color) must be worn for MEA 125, 108, 210, and 225. Also a watch with a digital second timer or sweep hand. Uniforms must be clean with an appropriate fit. A lab coat on top or a t-shirt underneath may be worn for those who need another layer. Sweaters or fleece jackets may not be worn over the uniform. Students who appear for class and/or externship and are not appropriately attired will be dismissed from class/externship with an absence marked for that day's attendance.

NAME BADGES: HCC student identification name badge must be worn on the left chest of the uniform. If a name badge is lost, the student must inform the clinical instructor immediately and a temporary acceptable badge/identification will be worn. Name badges should be purchased only at the Scrub Wearhouse in Holyoke. Ph: 413-552-3700. If an identification badge is provided by the clinical agency, this badge is worn in addition to the student's HCC name badge.

- PERSONAL HYGIENE: Students shall maintain personal hygiene, including oral care. Students shall be free of offensive body odor and/or cigarette odor (see SMOKING below). No cologne, after-shave, scented lotions, or perfumes are permitted.

- SHOES: Appropriate clinical shoes are required (no open toes, open backs, heels, winter boots, clogs, or side openings). Additional information may be provided in class.

- HAIR: Neat. Clean. Longer hair (e.g., longer than shoulder length) must be pulled back off the face and off the collar for infection control compliance. Facial hair must be neatly trimmed so that it may be completely covered by a single surgical or HEPA mask for infection control compliance.

- FINGERNAILS: Fingernails should be clean and of reasonable length (no longer than 1/4 inch past the fingertips is the standard). Artificial nails and nail polish are not permitted at the majority of clinical sites due to infection control compliance.

- JEWELRY: Watch and a plain band ring (no protruding stones) only. For those with pierced ears, earrings may not dangle for safety reasons. If other body parts are pierced, please avoid wearing jewelry during externship hours. In addition, you must follow the dress code of the facilities in which we work. Infection control and safety is of utmost importance.

- TATTOOS: All visible tattoos shall be covered. We must follow the dress codes of the

facilities in which we work. You may not request a specific clinical site. Sites are determined by the college.

- **SMOKING:** Smoking is not allowed while in uniform or during the clinical experience. Students may not attend clinical with cigarette odor due to student, instructor, or patient health conditions that may include severe asthma or other sensitivities of the respiratory tract aggravated by cigarette odors. Students are encouraged to utilize available smoking cessation resources available in the Student Health Services office located in Frost 105.
- **PERFUMES/COLOGNES:** Due to sensitivities, students are not permitted to wear perfumes, colognes, scented lotions, or use strong smelling soaps while attending class or clinical.
- **GUM:** Gum chewing is not allowed in the clinical classroom setting or on externship.

**The clinical instructor may require a student to leave the clinical area until the student is in full compliance with the dress code. Time missed will be counted as absent.**

### **CELL PHONE POLICY/OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of any and all personal electronic devices, including: cell phones, cameras, Mp3 players, computers, IPads, any type of video/audio recording devices, etc. are strictly prohibited during all classroom and clinical sessions. Digital voice recorders may be permitted under the discretion and written consent of the course instructor and with written recommendation for academic accommodations from the Office for Students with Disabilities & Deaf Services (OSDDS).

While the carrying and use of cell phones, pagers, and other personal electronic devices are permitted at HCC, they must be off or set on silent mode in the classroom. If a student experiences or anticipates a potential emergency situation outside of class, the student should inform the course instructor and proceed to a private area to use their device.

Cellphone usage is prohibited at externship sites except for designated breaks and/or lunch periods.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**NO ELECTRONIC RECORDING OF ANY NATURE IS ALLOWED WITHOUT PRIOR WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION FROM THE INSTRUCTOR.** In this era of viral videos and insensitive web content, in order to ensure a safe and respectful learning and teaching environment, we maintain a ZERO TOLERANCE for unauthorized electronic recording, copying, posting, etc. of any information or images related to this program or any course-related activity.

Specifically, students are prohibited from posting any content that may include personal health information of any kind for any student, instructor, patient, or any facility. Students are also prohibited from distributing or displaying any official documents of the Medical Assisting Certificate program or affiliated clinical facilities. This policy is in addition to any existing course policies or policy of HCC and our clinical affiliates. See HIPPA section later in this handbook.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in dismissal from class, clinical, or program.

### **GRADING POLICY**

Students must maintain an overall grade point average of 2.0 once they begin the courses in the certificate and have no grade less than a C in all HTH, HMC, and MEA courses in the certificate.

Students may repeat MEA designated courses *only once* throughout the length of the Medical Assisting certificate program and will be required to if they receive a grade of C- or lower. Since MEA courses are only offered spring semester (with the exception of MEA 225) *a student will need to wait until the following year* to re-take the required courses. Receiving a grade of C- or lower a second time in any course will result in dismissal from the Medical Assisting Certificate program. This same policy applies if a student is administratively withdrawn from the course. If a student must withdraw from a course or courses during the semester, but wants to come back the following year, they have the option of submitting an appeal to the dean of Health Sciences which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **CORI/SORI POLICY**

Criminal and sexual offender background checks are required to participate in clinical courses. All Medical Assisting students must pass the requirements of a CORI - Criminal Offence Record Investigation and SORI – Sexual Offence Record Investigation. An applicant who has been convicted of a crime (misdemeanor or felony) must meet with the Dean of Health Sciences to determine his/her eligibility to participate in the externship. This background check is completed as part of the registration process for officially registering for MEA 225: Career Development. Students generally complete this step while enrolled in MEA 210. CORI/SORI background checks may need to be re-processed at the decision of the division dean, or if a student needs to re-take MEA 210. The student has an ethical and moral responsibility to report any changes in CORI/SORI status that occur during the MEA 225 course or immediately preceding the start of the semester during which the student is enrolled in the course.

### **HEALTH/IMMUNIZATION RECORD REQUIREMENTS**

All students enrolled in the Medical Assistant Certificate program must submit the appropriate health forms **by April 15, 2020** to complete the program in a timely manner. This includes a physical exam, immunizations, and TB testing. Please note that the program cannot guarantee timely registration and placement in MEA 225 if the April 15, 2020 deadline is not met by the student.

Enrollment in MEA 225 is contingent upon Student Records receiving all required health and immunization forms prior to enrolling in the course, unless alternative detailed arrangements have been made in writing. All students registering for MEA 225 must receive this “medical clearance” prior to conducting CORI/SORI background checks and drug testing.

**Immunization records, official lab titer reports, screenings, and physical exam records must be submitted to Student Records in Frost 221, Faxed to 413-552-2555 or sent by email to [immunizations@hcc.edu](mailto:immunizations@hcc.edu) by April 15, 2020. Please keep your own copies of all documents submitted and “cc” the certificate coordinator on all emails re: immunizations to [Jgrant@hcc.edu](mailto:Jgrant@hcc.edu)**

Please note: history of disease is not sufficient - Flowsheets are not acceptable.

**It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all health requirements have been met and are complete for the duration of the program.** Failure to keep requirements updated or not informing the certificate coordinator will result in the student’s inability to participate in MEA 225 or complete the program.

**\*Please go to Student Records in Frost 221 as you begin this process. The documents that they will accept are extremely specific.** The process of acquiring all necessary documentation can take weeks and in some cases months. Please be vigilant and follow-up with them promptly.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

Mandatory Health Insurance Coverage: All students must be covered by their own health insurance or they can purchase coverage through the college. Please refer page 36 of the most current published form of the HCC Student Handbook (2018-19) for more information. ([http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student\\_Handbook\\_2018-2019\\_m-3.pdf](http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student_Handbook_2018-2019_m-3.pdf)).

## DRUG SCREENING POLICY

Most healthcare facilities affiliated with the college’s Health Science division require students to have a negative drug screen prior to beginning clinical experiences in their facility. As such, all students are required to have a negative drug screen for participation in the program.

**In addition, a clinical facility may require a student to submit and pass random drug screening analysis in order to remain at that facility.** Therefore, passing a drug screen is considered a Technical Standard for all students participating in Health Science division programs. If a student fails drug screening, re-testing should occur within 24 hours of notification of results. Students can NOT waive the drug screening process in the Medical Assistant Certificate Program based on negative results from enrollment in another Health Science Division program

### Drug Screening Procedure

Initial drug screening is coordinated through the dean’s office by Kathy Trombley

([ktrombley@hcc.edu](mailto:ktrombley@hcc.edu)) once a student receives health clearance. Drug screening is included in the cost of the course as it is billed through the student's tuition. The Work Connection at Holyoke Medical Center has been selected as the Health Science division's exclusive laboratory for student drug testing. There is a fee of approximately \$70 for this test for which students are billed through tuition.

Testing will occur ONLY at:

**The Work Connection at Holyoke Medical Center (HMC)**  
**575 Beech Street, Holyoke, MA 01040**  
**413-534-2546**

**Hours: 7:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday through Friday**

**Directions to Holyoke Medical Center:**

Take Interstate 91 to Exit 16, route 202. Follow route 202 North (Beech Street) to third set of lights at entrance to Holyoke Medical Center campus, turn left onto Hospital Drive. Park in gated "Patient Parking Lot E" on right (parking is free). The Work Connection entrance is located under the green canopy at the top of the parking lot.

Students will be notified when they are assigned to be tested. Drug screen results will be reviewed by the Work Connection Medical Officer and then forwarded to the Dean of Health Sciences.

There are certain prescription medications that may result in a positive drug test when the medication is taken appropriately. If a student is taking a prescribed medication that may result in a "positive" drug finding, the student needs to disclose this information to the dean of Health Sciences prior to drug testing. It is the student's responsibility to check with their healthcare provider if they have questions about any prescribed medications and any potential drug test interactions.

If a student's drug test comes back "positive" as a result of the appropriate use of prescribed medication, the student may appeal the finding if the medication was disclosed prior to testing, and if an appropriate statement from the student's healthcare provider is submitted. The student must initiate the appeal to the Dean of Health Sciences. Considerations are made on a case-by-case basis. **Failure to pass a drug screening exam, or refusal to submit to screening, will make the student ineligible to register for or participate in MEA 225 and may result in the immediate removal from Health Division programs.**

**Marijuana Use Policy**

Medical Assisting students should note the College marijuana policy below and be cognizant of how it may affect their externship placement, and/or their ability to continue in direct-care based coursework including but not limited to: Nursing, Practical Nursing, Medical Assisting, Community Health Worker, Radiologic Technology, and Direct Care Worker.

Although Massachusetts law now permits the use of medical marijuana and the possession, use, distribution and cultivation of marijuana in limited amounts, federal law, including the

Federal Controlled Substances Act of 1970, the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and the Drug-Free Schools & Communities Act of 1989 continues to prohibit the possession, use, distribution and/or cultivation of marijuana at educational institutions. Further, as marijuana remains classified as an illegal narcotic under federal law, institutions of higher education that receive federal funding are required to maintain policies prohibiting the possession and use of marijuana on their campuses. Accordingly, the possession, use, distribution or cultivation of marijuana, even for medical purposes, is prohibited on all community college property or at college sponsored events and activities.

**In light of this policy, if a student tests positive for marijuana during their drug screen, they will be ineligible to register or participate in MEA 225 (as with other positive drug screens) and may result in the immediate removal from the Health Division programs.**

### **MAINTAINING STUDENT STATUS**

In order to remain enrolled as a Medical Assisting major, the student must:

1. Satisfactorily complete all of the required courses. The student should understand that getting a C- or lower, withdrawing, or being administratively withdrawn from a required course will delay his/her progression within the program and may result in termination from the program. The student should consult the Medical Assistant certificate coordinator if a problem arises in this area.
2. Achieve a final grade of "C" or better in each Medical Assistant (MEA and HMC) course.
3. Complete the requirements of each Medical Assistant course as stated in the course syllabus.
4. Meet attendance requirements of the classes and externship as described on each course syllabus.
5. Maintain health status sufficient to participate fully in course requirements. Substance abuse (drugs and alcohol) by a student during the period of enrollment as a Medical Assistant major is considered a violation of the health policy.
6. Each student must hold liability insurance. This is offered as a group policy (at a group rate) through the program.

A student may be withdrawn from the Medical Assistant major if he/she fails to meet any of the above measures.

#### **Readmission Policy:**

- A student is only permitted to repeat MEA courses once during their enrollment in the program. Since courses are only offered once/year, the student who needs to repeat a

class will need to wait a full year until the class is offered again. Should the student be unsuccessful in repeating any required medical assisting course, by getting a C- or lower the second time, or withdrawing the second time a course is taken, the student is ineligible to continue in the medical assisting program.

Please note: The externship, MEA 225, is treated completely differently from other courses. Please see section below on **Externships**.

- Readmission of a student, regardless of the reason for withdrawal, is dependent upon space availability in the program and is not guaranteed to any student.
- A student must have an overall and programmatic GPA of 2.0 or better to be considered for readmission to the Medical Assisting Certificate program.
- Withdrawal from a medical assisting course for any reason will be considered a failure of the course for the reapplication purpose.
- A student who is seeking readmission to the medical assisting program must meet the same criteria as the student entering the medical assisting program for the first time.
- Since the American Medical Technologists allows a four-year window of application to take the registry exam in Medical Assisting (RMA), students who have not been enrolled within the previous four-year academic timeframe cannot seek readmission to the program; rather he/she must complete the program in its entirety.

### **Readmission Procedure:**

- A person seeking readmission to the medical assisting certificate program will write a letter of request to the certificate coordinator by May 31st for the next fall semester.
- The letter of readmission should include:
  - A request for readmission with course(s), semester and year of anticipated return to the program;
  - A statement of purpose toward certificate completion of the certificate program;
  - A completed HCC application;
  - Identification of the difficulties the student encountered along with a detailed description of remediation and the effectiveness of the remedies chosen.
- Readmission students are expected to update all admission requirements (health records, CORI/SORI testing and drug screen etc.) for the program.

**Note: Holyoke Community College has no provisions for a “leave of absence” from the**

**college. When a student does not enroll in a medical assisting course during the next order of sequencing, they then must follow the readmission procedure and may be able to re-enter on a space available basis. For this reason, a person interested in returning to the program after being away for any reason should communicate with the certificate coordinator as soon as possible.**

## **EXTERNSHIPS**

Whenever possible, consideration will be given to externship placement within a reasonable commute from the student's home. However, **placement sites within a geographic area are not guaranteed.** Externship sites vary from semester to semester. In addition, externship responsibilities will vary from site to site.

1. Placement for externship will be determined by the College. Changes to assigned and agreed upon externship sites will not be allowed. Extenuating circumstances should be brought to the attention of the certificate coordinator as soon as possible and no later than the second week of the MEA 210 course.
2. Students should not contact potential externship sites unless previous authorization from the certificate coordinator has been sought and obtained by the student.
3. Students must do an externship for a minimum of 160 hours during daytime office hours. Externships must be performed in an unpaid capacity.
4. Students accumulate hours by working full time or part-time but no less than 3 full days per week (accumulating at least 24 hours per week). Please be advised that not all externship sites allow students to extern only part-time, so this cannot be guaranteed.
5. Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from their externship sites. Although efforts will be made to place students no more than a half-hour drive by car from their home, externship site locations cannot be guaranteed.
6. At the end of your Externship, the completed Time Sheet and Student Externship Evaluation Form will be mailed or faxed by the Externship site to the college.
7. A professional appearance and attitude must be maintained at all times i.e., proper uniform or scrub; long hair must be pulled back, professional conduct and demeanor, etc. Any unprofessional conduct on the student's part may result in your immediate withdrawal from the externship.
8. Any problems and/or questions you may have during your externship should promptly be brought to the attention of your MEA 225 instructor. If they are not able to help, please contact the certificate coordinator and the Dean of Health Sciences.
9. Students must adhere to set externship days and times given by the site supervisor.
10. MEA 225 requires you to come to class one evening each week during the semester you are doing your externship. Whether you are working part or full time, and without

regard to when you start or complete your externship placement hours, you are required to attend class and complete all class assignments.

#### 11. Report of Unsatisfactory Externship Performance

When a student's performance in some aspect(s) of the clinical area is judged to be unsatisfactory by the preceptor at the externship site, the externship instructor will discuss the situation with the student as soon as possible after the instructor becomes aware of the unsatisfactory behavior.

Unsatisfactory externship behavior/performance is defined as:

- i. Action taken (or not taken) in a way that a patient's wellbeing is put in jeopardy.
- ii. Any action that fails to meet one or more of the Medical Assistant Essential Functions or the AMT Standards of Practice as described on pages 5-8 of this handbook.
- iii. Student is inadequately prepared for externship as determined by the site supervisor.
- iv. Student is behaving inappropriately in the externship setting.
- v. Student does not adhere to set days and times for externship.

The instructor and the student will then follow up with the preceptor to see if the situation can be resolved. If the preceptor feels this is not possible, and they do not want to continue the externship with the student, they should put the reasons for their dissatisfaction in writing and send to the instructor. The student will be contacted by the instructor and asked not to return to the externship site. This constitutes failing the MEA 225 course. **A student who fails the externship will be dismissed from the program and will not be able to sit for the AMT certification exam.** A student may appeal this dismissal by writing a letter to the Office of Student Affairs with an explanation of why they should be allowed to continue in the program. The decision of the Office of Student Affairs is final.

### **EXAM TO BECOME A REGISTERED MEDICAL ASSISTANT (RMA)**

Upon completion of all courses including MEA 225, students are encouraged to apply for and take the exam to become credentialed as a Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) by the American Medical Technologist (AMT). This exam is not given by HCC and it is incumbent upon students to apply and sit for the exam if they want this credential. The RMA exam consists of 210 four-option multiple choice questions in Administrative, Clinical, and General content areas. You are allowed 2 hours to complete the exam. Applicants are limited to a lifetime of four (4) examination attempts.

Students can arrange to select the HCC Testing & Workforce Certification Center (Kittredge Center, room 204) as their test site. The coordinator of the Center, Elaine Hebert-Dancik will be happy to work with you. You can reach her at: 413-552-2112 or at [ehebertdancik@hcc.edu](mailto:ehebertdancik@hcc.edu) Please note that this exam is not part of any courses in the Medical Assistant Certificate program and as such, the faculty and the certificate coordinator are not responsible for students ensuring students take or pass this exam. The testing fee to sit for this exam is \$90.00 which is a cost borne by the student.

## HIPAA POLICY

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is federal legislation for the protection and confidentiality of health information that you will learn about in class. Clinical facilities may require site specific HIPAA training in addition to classroom training. Students must comply with this training as well.

## LIABILITY INSURANCE (medical malpractice)

All students in health-related field options must be covered by a malpractice insurance policy. The cost of this coverage is \$15 per year and is offered by the college. The cost is included in the tuition and fees for the course.

## SEQUENCING OF MEA 225: MEDICAL ASSISTANT EXTERNSHIP

MEA 225: Career Development is the final course in the completion of the medical assisting certificate program and is scheduled the semester following clinical coursework: MEA 108, MEA 125, and MEA 210. Students are only registered for MEA 225 once all other academic courses within the program have been completed with a grade of C or better. Students must also complete CPR training, drug screening and all health services requirements prior to starting their externship experience.

## BREAK IN TIME SEQUENCE OF STUDIES

Students must complete MEA 225 the semester following completion of MEA 210, the Clinical Medical Assisting Techniques course. Since MEA 210 runs in the spring semester, this means *students should be prepared to do their externship during the summer semester* (Early June until Early August). Students who are not able to complete MEA 225 in the summer may have the opportunity to complete their Externship during the next fall semester. If a gap exists for longer than this one semester (summer) between completion of MEA 210 and start of the Externship, MEA 210 must be repeated in order to refresh skills prior to registering for MEA 225.

If there has been a gap in time between the student's completion of any prior coursework (in addition to MEA 210) and MEA 225, which is deemed significant by the certificate coordinator on a case by case basis, a student may be required to repeat such courses or undertake additional study and/or complete competency testing in such subject matter

In order to be eligible to register for MEA 225 (Externship) a student must receive final medical clearance from HCC. This means that all health related requirements have been fulfilled. In accordance with the "Sequencing of MEA 225: Medical Assisting Externship" policy (as described in this handbook), a student that does not qualify to take MEA 225 in a timely fashion will be required to repeat MEA 210 prior to enrolling in MEA 225.

## CERTIFICATE COMPLETION/GRADUATION

Students who have completed all courses except MEA 225, and register in the spring for MEA 225 for summer semester, are able to participate in the spring commencement ceremony. If they complete MEA 225 by the end of the semester when grades are due, they will be awarded their academic certificate at the end of the summer. Please note that if students do not complete their externship hours by the time grades are due, and the instructor needs to file an Incomplete, the grade will change upon completion of externship hours. If this happens, students will be awarded their academic certificate at the end of fall semester.

## HCC STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

**Students are responsible for reading and understanding the detailed Student Code of Conduct found in the HCC Student Handbook. The Student Handbook can be found on the HCC.edu website.**

*Holyoke Community College recognizes that all students, as members of the college community, enjoy the freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of association, freedom of the press, right of petition and the right of due process. These rights do not come without responsibilities and respect for others in the College community. Attendance at the College is a privilege and not a right, and enrollment carries with it obligations in regard to conduct, both in and out of class. Students are responsible for knowing and understanding the contents of this Code. Students are responsible for abiding by the laws governing the College and are expected to observe standards of conduct set by the College. (HCC Student Handbook 2017-2018).*

[https://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student\\_Handbook\\_2018-2019\\_m.pdf](https://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student_Handbook_2018-2019_m.pdf)

### Application of the Code of Conduct

The HCC Code of Conduct shall be used to address student disciplinary offenses as referenced in the college's policy. The Code of Conduct applies to student conduct, which occurs at the College, in any of its facilities, on any of its grounds or at any College related activity regardless of location. Under certain circumstances, the Code may also apply to off-campus conduct (clinical practice settings). Each student shall be responsible for their own conduct from the time of admission through the actual awarding of a degree, before classes begin and after classes end, and during periods between terms of actual enrollment. The Code of Conduct shall apply to a student's conduct even if the student withdraws from the College while a discipline matter is pending.

It is expected that every student in the Medical Assisting Certificate will adhere to the HCC Student Code of Conduct Policies and Procedures. Students are responsible for integrating and understanding the HCC Student Code of Conduct and following current published specific behaviors outlined in the [HCC Student Handbook](http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student_Handbook_2018-2019_m-3.pdf) ([http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student\\_Handbook\\_2018-2019\\_m-3.pdf](http://www.hcc.edu/Documents/Publications/SHB/Student_Handbook_2018-2019_m-3.pdf)).

- Disciplinary Offenses
- Discipline for Disruptive Conduct
- Discipline for Academic Dishonesty
- Code of Conduct Disciplinary Process

## Personal Conduct

A major aspect of student learning in the Medical Assistant certificate program occurs in clinical settings with direct student-patient contact. Safety is a critical component of every aspect of the course. Students have the responsibility to practice without undue risk to themselves or others, and to maintain fitness for duty (e.g., comply with and demonstrate all Essential Functions) throughout all classroom and clinical hours. Course instructors have the obligation to assess and make professional judgment with respect to each student's fitness for safe practice during classroom and clinical hours.

In most, if not all, non-academic disciplinary situations where a sanction may be handed down, the HCC Code of Conduct will be followed.

## WELLCONNECT

From the HCC.edu website:

*Most of the time we can manage the stress of life's changes. But sometimes, and for certain problems, solutions aren't easy to find. HCC offers free, comprehensive wellness services through the WellConnect Student Assistance Program. Through WellConnect, students, their families, and members of their household have access to one-on-one, 24/7 mental health counseling; legal assistance; budget, debt, and financial counseling; new parent coaching; and numerous other services and resources. One of the benefits of this program is the flexibility it offers students, who are able to access one-on-one counseling at locations and times that are convenient for them.*

Students can access WellConnect 24 hours a day, seven days a week by:

- Calling [866.640.4777](tel:866.640.4777) (voice/TTY)
- Visiting the WellConnect website, <https://wellconnect.cuthrive.com/>

To register, please use the following:

- Access Code/School Code: HCC-STU
- Passphrase: HOLYOKE CC

\*Further detailed information is available on the HCC website: <https://www.hcc.edu/student-life/health-and-wellness/wellconnect>

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

HCC is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, genetic information, gender identity or sexual orientation in its programs and activities in accordance with relevant state and federal laws.

Additionally, HCC will not tolerate sexual violence against students, staff, faculty, or visitors in any form, including but not limited to: sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, as defined in the Policy on Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity (Policy Against Sexual Violence).

Please note: All faculty members and staff have a duty to report incidents of sexual violence - past or present- to HCC's Title IX Coordinator, Olivia Kynard, at 413-552-2173. The Affirmative Action/Title IX office is located in Marieb 319 during the 2019-20 academic year.

## NOTES

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