


Workforce Recruitment Solutions

Hamilton Health Center Medical Assistant Training Program

Presenter

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MA Recruitment Challenge

- ❖ According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics, job growth for medical assistants is expected to grow by 29%, or over 184,000 jobs by 2026.
 - ❖ Healthcare and social assistance is the largest and fastest growing industry sector in the southcentral planning region.
 - ❖ This industry sector also has the largest occupational gap in the region, exacerbated by COVID 19, particularly in the healthcare support and health care provider professions.
 - ❖ FQHCs are in competition with the hospital systems when recruiting MAs
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Target Population

Adults – 18+

Criteria – high school graduate or GED

Online Education partner – National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement (NIMAA)

Youth – 17-18 years of age

Criteria – Seniors in high school, B grade point average, 2 references from school faculty, 500- word essay, in-person interview, meeting with parents/guardians

Must reach 18 years by high school graduation

Online Educational partner – Career Steps

Adult Students

More mature and independent

Recruitment/marketing strategies must be implemented

Adult students must balance training requirements with family and income needs

More difficult to keep them engaged and committed to the 7-9-month training commitment

Youth

- Under 18 requires parental consent and participate in interview & orientation
- Must work with local school district(s)
- Education partner must be willing to work with students under 18 years of age
- School Districts must be willing to be active participant –
 - Release students for half days to attend classes
 - Provide transportation
 - Provide lunches
 - Assist/Coordinate recruitment of potential students

Partnerships & Resources

- School Districts
- Local universities and community colleges
- Online education vendors
- Local Workforce Boards
- PA Department of Labor & Industry
- Funders - grants

Pre-Apprenticeship vs Apprenticeship Programs

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- ❑ Pre-apprenticeship programs are **linked with existing apprenticeships programs** and provide the instruction, preparation, and supports to advance participants to apprenticeship programs or other careers.
 - ❑ Apprenticeships are innovative training programs that allow employers to develop and prepare their future workforce, while providing individuals with a learn-while-you-earn approach to career development.

Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

Prepare individuals for success in registered apprenticeship programs through a combination of industry-based training and classroom instruction

Provide meaningful hands-on instruction in addition to technical training that often lead to industry-recognized credentials

https://www.pacareerlink.pa.gov/jponline/Apprenticeships?xMFDV9uosbd0J3zVjV1iq@VXw2omTIUAjOpyoTUjAMGnWobRt0pgTjQMtqS5bjq5tXXTkn1oyeE4CRAIqj1GbK_BaPObq9GQGxDAXFzqg0Ri0K_toDVY@iQSiJhHHBX03fXhEm8t6p2eycB@RzYQJpZL7FHDKsPlu6EoBUlmQY-HTYluhwvPzsad7uixl2n2RnF5@4YtfAW4vokP4fttTsinmpmlFun

https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/apprenticeship_toolkit.pdf

Apprenticeship components

Paid Job - Paid employees while they learn skills that enhance their employers' needs.

On-the-Job Learning - Develops skilled workers through structured learning in a work setting.

Classroom Learning - Improves job-related skills through a classroom education setting (virtual or in-person).

Mentorship - Provides support of a skilled worker to assist and enhance critical hands-on-learning.

Credentials - Offers a portable, nationally-recognized credential to be issued at the completion of the program.

Key elements of a **registered** apprenticeship program

The apprentice is a full-time, benefit-receiving, paid employee of the sponsoring organization.

The apprenticeship program includes at least 2,000 hours of On-the-Job (OTJ) training and 144 hours of Related Technical Instruction (RTI), which can take place in a classroom at the workplace or at a local college or education provider.

The apprentice must be paid at least the minimum wage, with wages progressing as the apprentice moves through the program.

On-the-job training must be structured, planned and coordinated and cannot simply be a job shadowing experience or a short-term employee induction program.

Benefits of a Registered Apprentice Program

It's an effective way for businesses to ensure an ample supply of well-qualified, highly trained workers by engaging directly in their preparation, education and training.

Traditional postsecondary education programs are designed to prepare students for multiple careers and, Apprenticeship is designed by and for the employer to meet the unique needs of a specific job.

Apprentices learn primarily in the workplace; they are trained using the same state-of-the-art equipment that they will use on the job, and they will be instructed and mentored by skilled workers

These programs are also eligible to apply for state grants via the Department of L&I

Hamilton Health Center Experience

- Hamilton's program became a registered apprenticeship program in 2021
- It was the first MA training program to become an apprenticeship program in PA
- It took approximately one year from applying to getting approved



Training Cohorts

Hamilton has trained 3 cohorts of adults and 1 class of 10 high school students since 2021.

Adult- independent learners for classroom instruction with in person lab instruction.

Youth-in person instructor lead classroom and lab instruction .

Changed from adults to youth in 2023 because it was difficult to keep adults engaged. 8 adults began the program but only 4 completed it over the 2 years we ran the program.

Additionally, adults who completed left employment within one year for employment with the hospital system.

Hamilton partnered with NIMAA as their training vendor for the adults. NIMAA handled all marketing and enrollment.

Transition to youth

- The training vendor had to be changed because NIMAA would not permit students under age 18 to enroll in the program.
 - Transitioned to CareerStep as training vendor
 - Approached local inner city school district to recruit high school students. School District signed an MOU outlining each partner's responsibilities
 - Also partnered with Harrisburg University to be the location for the classroom and lab instruction. HU also signed an MOU giving Hamilton and the students access to their building
 - Recruitment started in spring 2023 focused on juniors who would be seniors in the fall
 - Criteria for enrollment was established
 - B GPA
 - letters of recommendation
 - 500-word essay
 - Interviews with students
- 10 students enrolled, class started September 2023, 9 of 10 graduating in June. They still have 100 hours of externship left. Curriculum included 437 of classroom and 322.5 hours of hands-on lab
- This is a 90% completion rate greater than ever expected. This compares to a 50% completion rate with adults.

MA Training Program Career Pathway

- Medical Assistant (MA) Certificate of completion from an approved training vendor.
- Students are eligible to work as an MA in any environment.
- Eligible to sit for the Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) exam.
- Must be age 18+, High school diploma/GED and completion of an approved MA training program.

Health Center Financial Committment

- Key to success of the program is to have an internal program coordinator/instructor
 - Program supplies and equipment are required including lap top computers
 - Tuition costs – determined by training vendor
 - NIMAA is approved by PDE so students can get PELL grants
 - CareerSteps tuition paid by Hamilton via a grant they received
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- Hamilton provided students with scrubs so they could be identified with the program
 - Program requires preceptors during the externship experience. The preceptors are existing experienced MAs. A stipend is paid to the preceptors while they are assisting the externs.
 - Consider paid externships as students need to begin to earn a wage


Lessons Learned

- L&I requires that student Apprentices cannot be responsible for any expenses
- State L&I staff are not familiar with the medical profession, so you have to educate them while you go through the process
- You have to decide how you want to structure your program – Pre-apprentice vs apprentice program. The Pre-apprenticeship program is more appropriate for the training process, but you must connect that program to an approved apprenticeship program. The pre-apprentice program doesn't have to be run by the health center, but you don't control what curriculum is taught.
- Now that Hamilton has a demonstrated program. They are considering transitioning the classroom training to a local university and retaining the lab and externship components of the program.



Funding Support

- Students are eligible for the WIOA funding through the local workforce boards.
- For pre- apprenticeship and apprenticeship program, grants are available via Labor and Industry – example School-to Work grants were recently awarded – Hamilton received one of those grants which will support the program through May 2026.



Closing Remarks

- Health centers have to determine if they want to invest time and energy into developing their own programs whether its for medical assistants, dental assistants, or something else.
- There are a number of new programs out there looking for employers to place externs – this may be the level you choose to be in
- There are no guarantees that students will remain with you organization after training
- MA training programs do not need to become a registered apprentice program