

**The History of the  
American  
Association  
of Medical  
Assistants**



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# History of the American Association of Medical Assistants

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## 1955

The Kansas Medical Assistants Society initiated a meeting in Kansas City, Kansas, to consider the formation of a national organization.

The name of the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA) was accepted by vote.

## 1956

The Charter Meeting was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The Constitution and Bylaws was adopted and permanent officers were elected.

The American Medical Association (AMA) passed a resolution commending the objectives of AAMA.

Carmen Kline, CMA-A (KS) was co-chair with Maxine Williams, CMA-A (KS) for the AAMA Founding Meeting.

## 1957

Maxine Williams, CMA-A (KS) was elected the first AAMA president.

At the first Annual Meeting, the House of Delegates was accepted as the legislative body of the national association.

At this meeting, the first educational sessions were designed to increase the professionalism of medical assistants.

The first official publication, *The Ambassador*, was published.

## 1958

Tri-level membership was approved with one membership card for local, state and national membership.

A national emblem was selected.

## 1959

AAMA was incorporated in the State of Illinois as a not-for-profit professional organization.

The national headquarters was opened in Chicago, Illinois.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the American Association of Medical Assistants is to enable medical assisting professionals to enhance and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and professionalism required by employers and patients; protect medical assistants' right to practice; and promote effective, efficient health care delivery through optimal use of the multiskilled CMA (AAMA).

### Definition of the profession

Medical assisting is an allied health profession whose practitioners function as members of the health care delivery team and perform administrative and clinical procedures.

The Scholarship Fund was started with a \$200 contribution from Maxine Williams. It was later named the Maxine Williams Scholarship Fund.

A Certification Committee was appointed to develop the AAMA Certification program.

## 1960

Tri-level membership in AAMA was voted as mandatory.

## 1961

The Certifying Board was established.

## 1962

A sample examination for Certified Medical Assistants (CMAs) was given at the convention with no credit given.

## 1963

The first certification examinations were given in California, Kansas and Florida.

## 1966

A special committee was appointed to develop curriculum standards for the training of medical assistants, as a prelude to collaborating with the American Medical Association in the accreditation of educational programs on a postsecondary level.

## 1968

The AAMA Endowment was established as a public foundation for educational, charitable and scientific purposes.

The name of the official publication was changed to the *The Professional Medical Assistant*.

## 1969

The "Essentials of an Approved Educational Program for Medical Assistants" were approved by the AMA Council on Medical Education and the AMA House of Delegates.

Five two-year educational programs were accredited by AMA's Council on Medical Education in collaboration with AAMA's Program approval committee.

Student and faculty memberships were approved as new categories of membership.

An Education Council was created to coordinate the educational activities of the association.

## 1971

Certification eligibility requirements were broadened to include medical assisting instructors and students.

The AMA House of Delegates approved a set of revised *Essentials* for a basic one-year curriculum, thus allowing for

the evaluation of programs not only in community and junior colleges but also in vocational-technical, proprietary and military-based institutions.

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**1972**

A committee was formed to begin work on a guided home study course.

AMA/AAMA filed a petition with the U.S. Office of Education seeking recognition as the official accrediting agency for medical assisting programs.

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**1973**

The Curriculum Review Committee became the Curriculum Review Board.

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**1974**

The U.S. Office of Education recognized AMA/AAMA as an official accrediting agency for medical assisting programs in public and private institutions.

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**1975**

The revised certification program, consisting of a basic test plus three specialty examinations Administrative, Clinical and Pediatric was implemented.

The name of the In-Service Education Committee was changed to the Continuing Education Committee.

The House of Delegates approved the adoption of the Continuing Education Unit and stipulated that CEUs meet the minimum criteria as promulgated by the National Task Force on the Continuing Education Unit.

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**1976**

AAMA's 20th Anniversary year was a time for noting progress during two decades of educational service. Membership reached 18,500 with 525 chapters in 47 states and the District of Columbia.

The number of AMA/AAMA accredited post secondary programs reached 117 in 108 institutions.

The highest number of medical assisting certificates—1,959—were awarded, making a total of 5,197 since the program's inception.

A new category of membership—international—was instituted.

The Task Descriptor Project was initiated whereby an analysis of 475 medical assisting tasks in 18 categories was undertaken.

Continued recognition for a four-year period was extended by the U.S. Office of Education to the Curriculum Review Board in its collaborative accrediting role with AMA.

The Continuing Education Committee officially launched the CEU Approval Program, whereby state societies and chapters that met specific guidelines could offer CEU credit to participants.

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**1977**

Active membership was opened to any practicing medical assistant who achieved AAMA certification.

The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) was engaged as the test consultant for the AAMA certification examinations.

Responsibility for the accreditation of one- and two-year medical assisting programs was transferred from the AMA's Council on Medical Education to the AMA-sponsored but independently operated Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA). The AAMA Endowment's Curriculum Review Board remained the recommending body.

Revised *Essentials of an Accredited Educational Program for the Medical Assistant* were accepted by the AMA Council on Medical Education.

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**1978**

The Continuing Education Board (CEB) was formed.

For the first time, the AAMA basic Certification Examination was given twice yearly (in January and June) at test centers nationwide.

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**1979**

The DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) process analysis of the medical assisting profession was conducted.

**1980**

The Certification Revalidation Program was officially launched, allowing Certified Medical Assistants to revalidate their credentialing by either the continuing education or examination methods.

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**1982**

A Legislation Committee Subcommittee on State Legislation was established to monitor grassroots legislation affecting allied health and to encourage member involvement in the legislative process at the local level.

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**1985**

A position statement adopted that AAMA advocate the credentialing of medical assistants through certification, with mandatory revalidation, and that a record of Certified Medical Assistants be maintained by AAMA to serve as the verification of certification status.

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**1988**

The AAMA logo was redesigned.

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**1989**

The Continuing Education Board (CEB) began the Sponsor Approval Program.

The new AAMA logo was introduced.

CMA pins were provided without cost for the new CMAs.

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**1990**

The DACUM was published.

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**1991**

The AMA's CAHEA approved the 1991 *Essentials and Guidelines for an Accredited Education Program for the Medical Assistant*.

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**1992**

The CEB announced in-house registration of AAMA-CEU credits.

AMA proposed that a new independent accrediting agency be established to replace CAHEA.

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**1993**

Effective January 1, 1995, a change in recertification was implemented. Of the 60 recertification points needed to

revalidate the AAMA-CMA credential, 20 must be from AAMA approved CEU programs. Specialty credentials require 5 of the 20 points be AAMA approved CEU programs. Point distribution: General 15; Administrative 15 and Clinical 15 with remaining 15 applied to any of the three content categories.

The Task Force on Restructuring CAHEA recommended the establishment of the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) as the accrediting agency. Preliminary announcement to dissolve CAHEA was made by the AMA.

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#### 1994

38th House of Delegates passed a Bylaws amendment requiring members to the Board of Trustees to be AAMA Certified Medical Assistants (CMA) holding current status.

The official dissolution of CAHEA was announced by the AMA. The CRB and AAMA Endowment voted to affiliate with the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).

The AAMA Endowment established the Surveyors Training Fund.

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#### 1995

The eligibility pathway for candidates of the AAMA Certification Examination was changed to require graduation from a CAAHEP accredited medical assisting program effective February 1, 1998.

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#### 1996

June 25: AMA House of Delegates granted AAMA Official Observer Status to the HOD.

BOT approved plans to establish website at [www.aama-ntl.org](http://www.aama-ntl.org).

National Board of Medical Examiners completed the 1996 Occupational Analysis on Medical Assisting.

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#### 1997

The *Role Delineation Study* was completed and replaced the previous *DACUM Study*.

Approximately 13,000 candidates sat for the Certification Exam, a record number since its inception in 1963.

#### 1998

The Advanced Practice Document was implemented for advance CE Sessions.

AAMA held a Content-Based Standard Setting Exercise requested by the NBME.

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#### 1999

The Certifying Board established mandatory recertification as follows: "Beginning January 1, 2003, all CMAs employed or seeking employment as medical assistants *must* have current status in order to use the CMA credential in connection with employment."

The Board of Trustees approved the Disciplinary Standards and Procedures for Certified Medical Assistants.

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#### 2000

There were more than 470 CAAHEP-accredited medical assisting programs in 450 institutions across the United States.

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#### 2001

Partial autonomy for the Endowment's Curriculum Review Board was approved.

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#### 2002

The official publication, *PMA*, was changed to *CMA Today*.

A CMA pin journeyed into space on board a NASA shuttle.

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#### 2003

A third administration of the AAMA CMA Certification/Recertification Examination was established for October.

Health care provider level CPR was determined for mandatory for CMA recertification, effective January 2005.

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#### 2004

Partial autonomy for the Certifying Board was approved.

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#### 2005

The new Vision Statement was approved by the Board of Trustees: The vision of the American Association of Medical Assistants is to increase recognition of Certified Medical Assistants as the premier choice in the Allied Health Professions.

#### 2006

The AAMA held its 50th Annual Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, home to the association's charter meeting in 1956.

The Keynote Speaker was AAMA Founding Member Alice Budny, AAMA President (1963). Fifteen AAMA Past Presidents were introduced to the 50th House of Delegates. AAMA Founding Members Roberta Antrim, CMA-AC, MHR, and Sylvia Klotz, CMA-C, also were presented to the House of Delegates.

A slide presentation of the past 50 years of AAMA activities was prepared and presented by Mary Lou Allison, CMA-C, 1992 AAMA Past President.

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#### 2007

AAMA successfully defended "Certified Medical Assistant®" trademark registration in a lawsuit brought by American Medical Technologists (AMT).

The annual meeting name was officially changed from convention to conference.

Approved the renewal of the contract with the American Academy of Professional Coders for five years.

Appointed the Telemedicine Task Force to investigate the possibility and/or feasibility of integrating CMAs into a federal program that renders care via telemedicine to remote Inuit villages in Alaska.

Allocated funds for the AAMA President and Vice President to represent AAMA at the annual meeting of the Professional Association of Health Care Office Management.

## AAMA Annual Conventions

1957	1st	San Francisco, Calif.	1974	18th	Denver, Colo.	1991	35th	Pittsburgh, Pa.
1958	2nd	Chicago, Ill.	1975	19th	Louisville, Ky.	1992	36th	Seattle, Wash.
1959	3rd	Philadelphia, Pa.	1976	20th	Chicago, Ill.	1993	37th	Indianapolis, Ind.
1960	4th	Reno, Nev.	1977	21st	San Francisco, Calif.	1994	38th	Orlando, Fla.
1961	5th	Dallas, Texas	1978	22nd	Boston, Mass.	1995	39th	San Antonio, Texas
1962	6th	Detroit, Mich.	1979	23rd	New Orleans, La.	1996	40th	Philadelphia, Pa.
1963	7th	Miami Beach, Fla.	1980	24th	Kansas City, Kan.	1997	41st	Minneapolis, Minn.
1964	8th	Oklahoma City, Okla.	1981	25th	Milwaukee, Wis.	1998	42nd	Columbus, Ohio
1965	9th	New York City, N.Y.	1982	26th	Houston, Texas	1999	43rd	Nashville, Tenn.
1966	10th	St. Louis, Mo.	1983	27th	New York City, N.Y.	2000	44th	Albuquerque, N.M.
1967	11th	Los Angeles, Calif.	1984	28th	Portland, Ore.	2001	45th	Buffalo, N.Y.
1968	12th	Columbus, Ohio	1985	29th	Lexington, Ky.	2002	46th	Portland, Ore.
1969	13th	Honolulu, Hawaii	1986	30th	Chicago, Ill.	2003	47th	Detroit, Mich.
1970	14th	Des Moines, Iowa	1987	31st	Chicago, Ill.	2004	48th	Greensboro, N.C.
1971	15th	Atlanta, Ga.	1988	32nd	Richmond, Va.	2005	49th	Colorado Springs, Colo.
1972	16th	Phoenix, Ariz.	1989	33rd	Charleston, S.C.	2006	50th	Milwaukee, Wis.
1973	17th	Washington, D.C.	1990	34th	Los Angeles, Calif.	2007	51st	Louisville, Ky.