



## What is the National Institute for Medical Assistant Advancement (NIMAA)?

**NIMAA is a nonprofit educational institute that trains Medical Assistants to work effectively in today's high-performing primary care settings. NIMAA was created by community health centers to provide education and employment opportunities in the communities they serve, while addressing a growing demand for medical assistants.**

NIMAA has national healthcare leaders as instructors, the latest on-line teaching tools, and offers concurrent clinical practice and experience in carefully selected externship clinic sites around the country. Finally, NIMAA prepares students to take a national certification exam prior to graduation. Graduates are positioned to command jobs that provide a living wage and advancement in the healthcare field.

## Who is involved in NIMAA?

NIMAA is led by **Community Health Center, Inc.** of Connecticut and **Salud Family Health Centers** of Colorado, both recognized by the National Committee on Quality Assurance as Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Homes, using teams to provide comprehensive medical, dental, and behavioral health services. Leading practitioners of primary health care are advisors and a growing group of clinics are joining as externship sites. NIMAA is a post-secondary school approved and regulated by the Colorado Department of Higher Education, Private Occupational School Board.

## Why is NIMAA needed?

Today's leading primary care organizations are using integrated teams to deliver holistic, patient-centered care, with an elevated role for MAs. Medical assistants need collaborative and critical thinking skills and training in population management, patient panel management, and patient education to perform as effective members of these teams. Existing training programs for medical assistants have not kept up with the transformation in health care, and do not focus on primary healthcare. Most programs focus on training MAs for traditional administrative roles (e.g., billing, scheduling) and clinical support tasks (e.g., measuring vital signs, rooming patients, assisting with procedures) in hospitals or private medical offices.

## How is NIMAA different than traditional MA programs?

NIMAA teaches students traditional MA skills, such as rooming patients, taking vital signs, and administrative responsibilities. However, NIMAA goes beyond traditional MA programs by teaching students collaborative and critical thinking skills for effective team based care, patient portal management, and patient health coaching.

## What is the tuition for the NIMAA training program?

Traditional for-profit MA programs costs can exceed \$15,000. NIMAA understands that quality education should be accessible, which is why the program cost, after tuition and fees, is under \$7,000. The total cost for the class beginning September 2020 will be \$6,000 plus \$785 for books, the certification exam, and other expenses for each MA for the seven-month course. There may be a possibility of scholarships or tuition assistance at some externship sites.

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## More Frequently Asked Questions About NIMAA

### What is the demand for medical assistants?

▶ **The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 23 percent growth in demand for medical assistants from now through 2024, much faster than the average for all occupations.**

A strong national MA training program in primary care is a prerequisite for the successful transformation of the nation's healthcare system, so we believe the demand for the particular kind of training NIMAA uniquely offers will grow. Additionally, there is need for a program that gives medical assistants access to a competitive living wage. The average annual salary for an uncertified MA is \$26,500 plus benefits, while certification delivers an average annual wage of \$34,000 plus benefits.

### What does it cost primary care practices to participate in NIMAA?

There is no monetary cost to NIMAA externship partners to participate. Externship partners commit staff time to coordination of the program and oversight of the student experience. Some externship partners choose to assist students with tuition, often in exchange for a commitment to remain with the organization as MAs.

### What does the NIMAA curriculum involve?

The curriculum includes an entire set of skills and courses for the medical assistant of the future. The curriculum has a heavy emphasis on communication skills with patients, including agenda setting, goal setting and self-management support. It covers all traditional subjects, including rooming patients, vital signs, and teach-back at the end of the visit. Then we add NIMAA's unique focus on integrated team-based primary care, covering areas such as: working in an interprofessional team (understanding the different team roles and activities); understanding how the MA contributes to care coordination; learning approaches to health coaching and self-management support for patients, including motivational interviewing; understanding a population health perspective; and working with the team to address the needs of a large panel of primary care patients. Our curriculum provides instruction online, including synchronous video conference sessions with instructors. Then students practice in the clinic setting with the guidance of a preceptor.

The interactive online coursework combined with clinical experience from day one sets NIMAA apart from other online programs. Students have access to their instructors through Moodle, Zoom, phone, and email. Students also participate in a weekly video synchronous seminar with their instructor and classmates to discuss and breakdown topics.

### What certificate or credential will graduates receive?/

#### What exams can the students take?

There is a NIMAA certificate with significant value in and of itself because of the reputation in primary care of the founders and leaders of this program. Currently, NIMAA students sit for the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) medical assistant exam just before graduation.

### When will NIMAA be accredited?

Accreditation rules require our school to enroll and graduate students for two continuous years before we can apply for accreditation. We will submit our application by the end of 2020. NIMAA has designed its program, curriculum, and standards to comply with accreditation requirements.

For more information, please see [www.nimaa.org](http://www.nimaa.org)  
or Email us at [info@nimaa.org](mailto:info@nimaa.org)

