

2018 CMA (AAMA) Compensation and Benefits Report

Employers are increasingly demanding that their medical assistants have a CMA (AAMA) credential.¹ Every day the AAMA responds to more than 100 employer requests for CMA (AAMA) certification verification—for both current and potential employees.² Such demand is often due to the pressures of potential malpractice suits and the certification mandates placed on employers by managed care organizations.³

Additionally, the Medicaid Incentive Program requires that only credentialed medical assistants, such as CMAs (AAMA), and licensed health care professionals are permitted to enter medication, laboratory, and diagnostic imaging orders into the computerized provider order entry (CPOE) system for meaningful use calculation purposes.⁴ The CMA (AAMA) must have current status to use the credential, including for qualifying to enter orders for meaningful use for the Medicaid EHR Incentive Program.

Medical assistants and medical assisting educators across the country enthusiastically participated in the 2018 Compensation and Benefits Survey conducted by the American

Association of Medical Assistants. More than 5,000 medical assistants completed the survey.

The AAMA emailed an electronic questionnaire to more than 26,000 members and announced the survey via *AAMA e-Update* (87,000+ subscribers) and the AAMA Facebook page (43,000+ followers). The majority of respondents (83 percent) were medical assistants, while 5 percent identified themselves as medical assisting educators. Three percent of respondents identified themselves as medical practice managers, while 2 percent identified as both medical assistants and medical assisting educators. Most of the participants had earned the CMA (AAMA) credential (94 percent) and were members of the AAMA (96 percent).

Statistical significance and terms used

The large number of participants ensures that the results have a high degree of statistical significance. The overall margin of error for the 5,516 responses is ± 1.3 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Margin of error describes the statistical significance of the sample as an estimate of the population. The margin of error should be treated only as an approximation, since margin of error calculations are based on pure random selection, which is not achievable in traditional survey settings where response is voluntary. The ± 1.3 percent margin of error applies to overall statistics based on the total respondents to the survey; smaller breakout groups presented throughout the report have higher margins of error. Judgments based on statistics with

very low sample sizes should be made with caution. Statistics are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Employee pay rate and status

Both hourly pay rates and annual gross salaries were collected on the survey. Approximately 98 percent of full-time medical assistants are paid hourly, while roughly 2 percent are paid by annual salary. Of the 4,300 respondents who are practicing medical assistants, approximately 91 percent work full time while 9 percent work part time. For the purposes of this report, results represent compensation and benefits for the full-time employee population.

Compensation

Overall, of those surveyed, full-time medical assistants holding a current CMA (AAMA) certification earn an average of \$17.23 per hour or an average annual salary of \$32,727. Average hourly wages and salary varied for CMAs (AAMA) according to years of experience and other factors, which are broken down as follows.

By geographic region

The average annual earnings and hourly wages were computed for geographic regions of the United States (Figure 1). The Pacific region showed the highest earnings for full-time current CMAs (AAMA), with averages of \$38,705 annually and \$20.35 hourly. Across the country, the West North Central region turned in the second-highest annual earnings (\$34,426) and hourly wages (\$18.50). The full comparison is shown in Table 1.

Figure 1. Regions based on the United States Census divisions

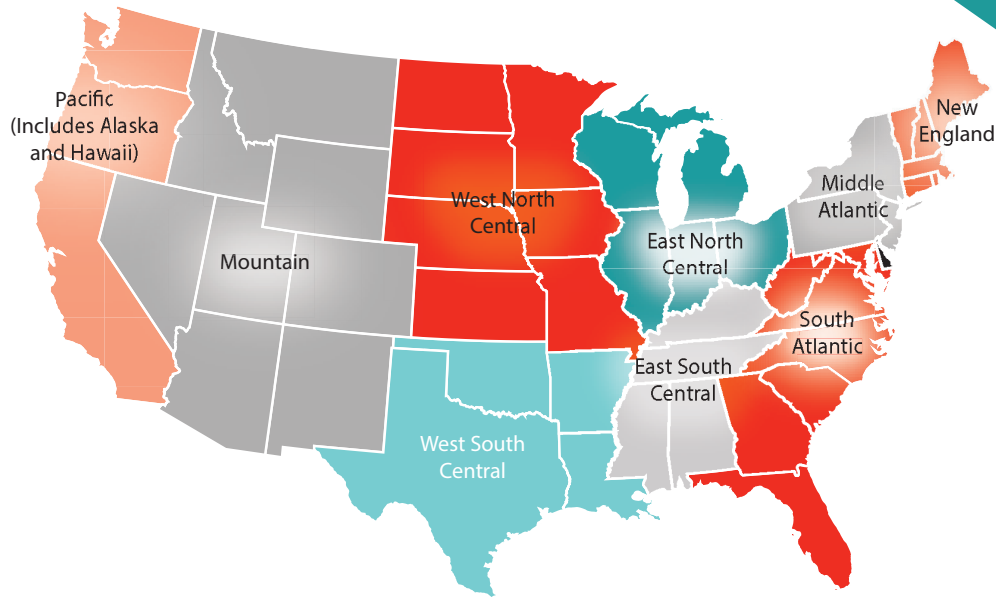


Table 1. Geographic region	Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience					
	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Northeast						
New England	\$ 16.31 30,875	\$ 17.53 33,835	\$ 18.13 34,355	\$ 18.96 34,318	\$ 20.45 40,750	\$ 18.01 34,409
Middle Atlantic	14.59 28,086	15.63 29,667	17.42 32,879	17.92 34,726	19.68 40,630	17.04 33,014
Midwest						
East North Central	15.03 28,096	15.70 28,852	16.35 30,915	17.35 32,675	18.88 35,536	16.43 30,598
West North Central	15.81 29,340	17.43 32,300	17.79 33,206	19.36 37,125	21.02 38,750	18.50 34,426
South						
South Atlantic	13.97 26,836	15.31 29,426	16.33 31,936	17.46 33,908	18.77 37,503	16.27 31,689
East South Central	13.25 25,897	14.50 28,500	15.25 28,667	16.31 30,972	18.36 36,122	15.53 30,561
West South Central	13.57 24,571	14.88 29,625	* *	16.75 35,591	19.80 38,269	15.80 30,906
West						
Mountain	14.85 26,768	15.63 28,962	17.51 31,974	17.82 33,348	20.32 39,441	16.99 31,469
Pacific	18.01 34,603	20.09 38,259	21.14 39,549	21.55 41,569	22.65 43,597	20.35 38,705

*Insufficient response

By work setting

The overwhelming majority of medical assistants surveyed work in physicians' offices. Nearly 95 percent of medical assistant respondents are employed in that setting, with roughly 2 percent in ambulatory surgery and another 2 percent in "other." About 1 percent of respondents work in inpatient settings. The breakdown of wages and earnings by work setting is shown in Table 2. Figures for home health settings are not listed due to insufficient response numbers.

By practice specialty

Sixty-two percent of medical assistant respondents work in a primary care practice. Another 32 percent work in practices with medical or surgical specialties. The income figures for practice specialty are shown in Table 3.

By number of specialties

Fifty-one percent of medical assistant respondents work in a single specialty practice, while 47 percent work in a multispecialty setting. The income figures for full-time current CMAs (AAMA) by number of specialties are listed in Table 4.

Table 2. Work setting		Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience				
Work setting	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Physician practice	\$ 15.15 28,476	\$ 16.46 30,973	\$ 17.25 32,595	\$ 18.23 34,820	\$ 19.78 38,131	\$ 17.23 32,642
Ambulatory surgery	16.02 35,885	17.80 37,767	* *	* *	* *	17.58 37,110
Inpatient setting	* *	* 27,273	* *	* *	* *	16.50 31,625
Other	16.17 30,731	16.79 31,143	* *	* *	20.17 39,967	17.58 34,740

Table 3. Practice specialty		Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience				
Practice specialty	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Primary care	\$ 15.13 28,356	\$ 16.45 30,903	\$ 17.35 32,790	\$ 18.10 34,453	\$ 19.69 37,806	\$ 17.16 32,452
All other medical and surgical specialties	15.28 29,088	16.66 31,373	17.16 32,309	18.28 35,482	20.02 38,844	17.47 33,310
Other	15.33 28,963	16.38 31,397	17.28 32,652	18.62 35,713	19.76 38,879	17.11 32,712

Table 4. Number of specialties		Average full-time CMA (AAMA) pay by years of experience				
Number of specialties	0–2 years	3–5 years	6–9 years	10–15 years	16 years+	Overall
Single specialty	\$ 15.16 28,480	\$ 16.29 30,712	\$ 17.09 32,513	\$ 18.23 34,707	\$ 19.84 38,710	\$ 17.20 32,816
Multiple specialties	15.36 29,215	16.71 31,455	17.41 32,828	18.29 35,073	19.91 37,956	17.37 32,859
Other	14.54 27,643	17.29 33,571	* *	* *	20.05 38,000	17.15 32,387

*Insufficient response

Employment benefits

Roughly 96 percent of all full-time medical assistants receive some form of benefits package from their employer (Figure 2).

Insurance

More than 84 percent of full-time medical assistants receive paid vacation. Another 81 percent receive dental coverage, while 75 percent receive major medical coverage. Just over 73 percent receive vision coverage, and 63 percent receive disability coverage. The full range of benefits for full-time medical assistants is shown in Figure 3.

AAMA membership and conference

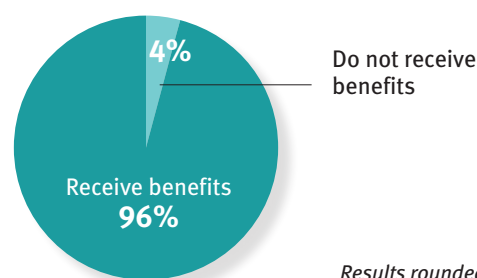
When asked if employers offer to help pay for various AAMA expenses, nearly 16 percent of full-time medical assistants who are AAMA members responded that their employers pay their membership dues in full (Figure 4). In addition, approximately 8 percent have their annual conference registration fees paid for in full, and nearly 4 percent have travel and lodging paid by their employers. ♦

The American Association of Medical Assistants thanks all the participants who made this survey possible.

References

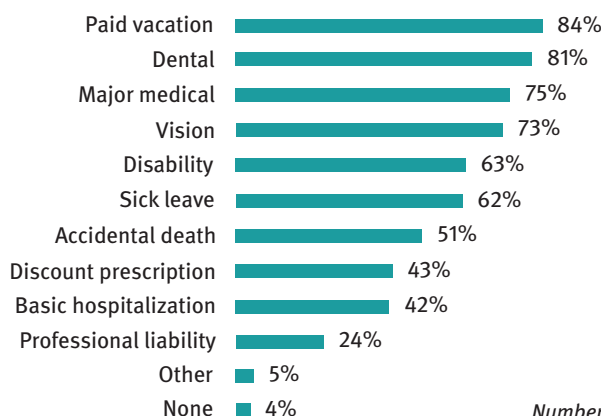
1. Balasa DA, Johnson A. CMA (AAMA) certification: Why it is the premier credential. *CMA Today*. 2015;48(6):6-7. <http://aama-ntl.org/cma-today/archives/article?id=55d2d64a-4840-6a90-a81c-ff00003b2c18#.WdOfftSxH>. Published November 2015. Accessed October 3, 2018.
2. What is a CMA (AAMA)? American Association of Medical Assistants. <http://www.aama-ntl.org/medical-assisting/what-is-a-cma>. Accessed October 3, 2018.
3. Balasa DA. Why more employers are hiring CMAs (AAMA). *CMA Today*. 2013;46(5):6-7. <http://www.aama-ntl.org/cma-today/archives/article?id=b286d24a-4840-6a90-a81c-ff00003b2c18>. Published January 2007. Updated September 2013. Accessed October 3, 2018.
4. Balasa DA. MACRA final rule: Changes do not eliminate order entry provisions. *CMA Today*. 2017;50(1):6-7. <http://www.aama-ntl.org/cma-today/archives/article?id=2f88d84a-4840-6a90-a81c-ff00003b2c18#.WdOfzVuPJhG>. Published January 2017. Accessed October 3, 2018.

Figure 2. Benefits received by full-time medical assistants



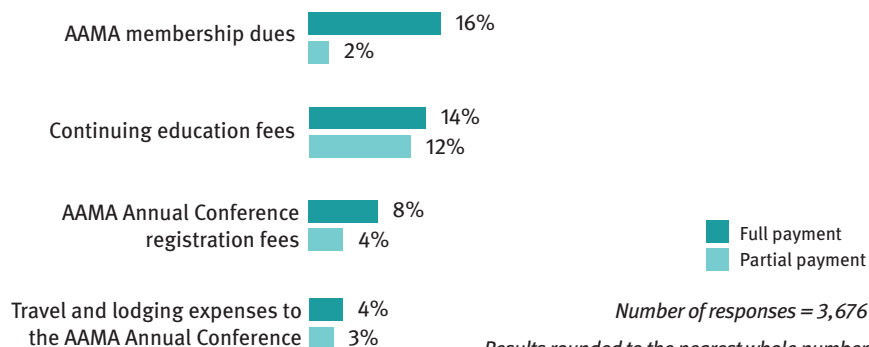
Number of responses = 3,833
Results rounded to the nearest whole number

Figure 3. Insurance benefits received by full-time medical assistants



Number of responses = 3,833
Results rounded to the nearest whole number

Figure 4. Dues assistance received by full-time medical assistant AAMA members



Number of responses = 3,676
Results rounded to the nearest whole number

Of survey respondents who identified primarily as medical assisting educators, more than 88 percent of medical assisting educators surveyed work full time, with the other 12 percent teaching part time. The majority (91 percent) of full-time educators receive their compensation in the form of an annual salary, while around 9 percent are paid hourly.

Compensation

On average, full-time medical assisting educators reported earning an annual gross salary of \$57,199, with nearly 32 percent reporting that they earn at least \$65,000 annually, and 20 percent reporting more than \$75,000 in annual earnings. The breakdown of educators' salaries by years of experience is shown in Table 5.

Employment benefits

Insurance


More than 83 percent of full-time educators receive major medical coverage and 84 percent receive dental insurance. Discount prescription coverage, accidental death, disability, and vision were well over 50 percent rates. Rates of coverage for full-time educators are listed in Figure 5.

AAMA membership and conference

When asked if employers offer to help pay for various AAMA expenses, 42 percent of full-time educators who are AAMA members reported full payment of membership dues, with 55 percent reporting full payment of conference registration fees. Nearly 51 percent reported full payment of travel and lodging for conference (Figure 6).

2018 Medical Assisting Educator Compensation and Benefits Report

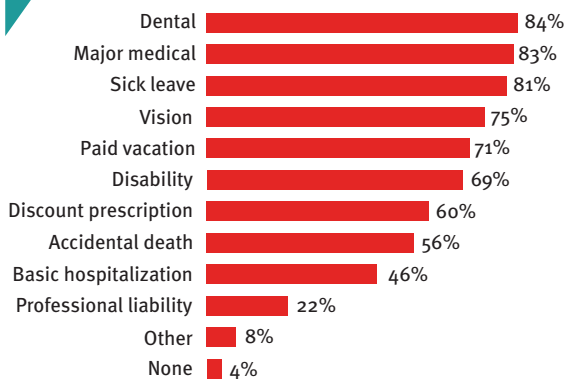
Table 5. Average full-time educator pay by years of experience



Overall	\$57,199
0–2 years	52,639
3–5 years	52,052
6–9 years	57,241
10–15 years	56,622
16+ years	59,569

Number of responses = 204

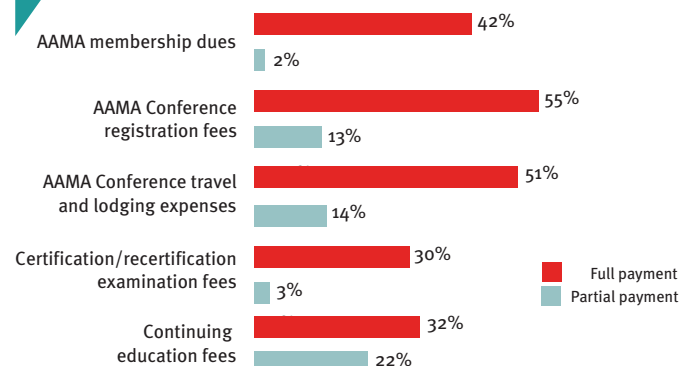
Figure 5. Insurance benefits received by full-time educators



Number of responses = 202

Results rounded to the nearest whole number

Figure 6. Dues assistance received by full-time educators



Number of responses = 200

Results rounded to the nearest whole number