

Certified Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam (CMAA) Candidate Handbook

7500 W 160th St. Stilwell, KS 66085

Toll-free: 800-499-9092 Fax: 913-661-6291

info@nhanow.com

Current Candidate handbooks are available at www.nhanow.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

National Healthcareer Association is a certification organization with their headquarters located in Stilwell, KS. The National Healthcareer Association (NHA) was established in 1989 with a vision of implementing national competency standards to promote patient safety and as an information resource and support network for allied healthcare professionals and the healthcare industry.

The allied healthcare field continues to be one of the fastest growing segments of the economy, demanding an ever increasing number of professionally trained, career oriented individuals. The increasing demand for skilled allied healthcare workers necessitated the development of an agency dedicated to testing the competencies defined by each profession.

The NHA's national examinations utilize a research and development team of psychometricians and test developers who strive to follow industry standards for certification exam development. Subject Matter Experts from the field with assistance from the test development experts define the competencies, write items and review them for appropriateness and set the cut score. Candidates who earn certification with the NHA have demonstrated at least the minimum level of knowledge to competently practice the profession.

The NHA certification is supported within the healthcare industry by technical schools, 4 and 2-year colleges, unions, hospitals, associations, governmental agencies and state health departments, and recognized by more and more employers. The U.S. Department of Military and Veteran's Affairs also recognizes and sponsors the NHA certifications and exams.

Since 1989, the NHA national certification exams have been offered in all fifty states. As of October 2010, more than 150,000 national certifications have been issued throughout the country, making the NHA the largest Allied Healthcare Certification agency.

The NHA strives on a continuing basis to:

- Develop valid competency assessments for medical assistants.
- Maintain industry confidence by providing high-quality certifications that will enhance the provision of health care.

A. The NHA's Primary Functions, Strategic Vision, Mission And Core Values

The National Healthcareer Association's vision is to be the premier allied health certification organization.

- To be recognized as the leader and preferred certification sought by allied health professionals throughout the world;
- To contribute to global efforts that improve patient care and safety by the development, implementation, and continuation of high-quality competency exams for allied health care professionals.

The Primary Functions of the NHA are:

- To build certification examinations and competency assessments which are used as benchmarks for national and international industry standards and frameworks;
- To work with stakeholders in the profession to develop comprehensive frameworks and skill standards.

NHA Definition of a Medical Administrative Assistant:

A Medical Administrative Assistant possesses the necessary knowledge of administrative practices, procedures, and technologies to ensure the smooth functioning of the organization. A Medical Administrative Assistant coordinates the administrative duties with the clinical professionals of the organization.

B. The NHA's Core Values

In pursuit of the NHA's vision and mission, the quality of services will be guided by Excellence. We are committed to excellence by creating a culture that integrates best practices and professional development. Excellence at the NHA means the highest quality products, the most competent staff, and continuous improvement of our products and services. Our Core Values include:

- **Integrity:** Integrity at the NHA is being honest and ethical and having the moral strength to do the right thing. We incorporate this value in every aspect of our personal and professional lives, and in our commitment to promoting patient care and safety.
- **Accountability:** the NHA's work produces greater accountability in the health care system by ensuring that our certified professionals seek to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of patient care services. Additionally, we set and maintain standards of accountability for the individuals we certify by expecting all to adhere to the Code of Ethics.
- **Caring:** Caring is central to the NHA's customer-oriented approach to our work. It is an intrinsic value, predicated upon mutual respect, and engendering trust in all of our settings and relationships within the allied health care system.
- **Creativity:** Creativity requires an innovative perspective, openness to change, and a management system capable of adapting and able to respond to the dynamic nature of our health care and educational environments.
- **Teamwork:** We are committed to fostering an environment that promotes respect, communication, and collaboration among all members of our teams and our partnerships.
- Advocacy: At the NHA, we advocate for the allied health care workforce, promoting policies, programs, and
 practices to secure the highest level of worker education, yielding high-quality patient care and societal wellbeing.

2. THE NHA MEDICAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION BOARD

The NHA Certification Board is the autonomous governing board that has responsibility for the Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Program. The NHA Certification Board operates independently to set policy over essential certification activities. The Board has the responsibility for oversight over all medical administrative assistant certification and recertification decisions, including governance, eligibility standards, the development, administration and scoring of assessment instruments. Specifically, the Certification Board is responsible for:

- Adopting certification program policies and procedures
- Adopting its own rules of procedure
- Approving the Medical Administrative Assistant Certification exam content outline (aka blueprint)
- Approving appointments to the Exam Review committee and acting on their recommendations
- Appointing a Disciplinary and Appeals Committee
- Electing successors to the Board
- Appointing ad hoc committees as necessary

The NHA Certification Board represents leaders and important stakeholders in this field. The NHA Certification Board is composed of eight elected members. Seven members of the Board represent practitioners or educators and the eighth member is the public member representing a recipient of services. The Executive Director serves as the secretary of the Certification Board and is non-voting.

Members of the Board serve three year terms and may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms.

Nominations for Board positions are accepted throughout the year and can be sent to the Executive Director.

3. APPLYING FOR THE MEDICAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION EXAM

A. Eligibility

To be eligible to earn an NHA certification, the individual must meet the requirements below:

- Possess either a High School Diploma, or equivalency, and,
- Recently successfully completed a training program or have one year of work experience within the field.
 Candidates must be able to provide written proof of training or experience. While candidates may obtain the NHA certification with 1 year experience and not have completed a training program, this may not be sufficient to meet any state registration or licensure requirements if they exist. Please check with your state regulatory agencies for specific requirements.

Candidates are ultimately responsible for knowing any registration or licensure requirements in their state.

An applicant scheduled to graduate from an accredited high school or GED Program may receive a provisional certification under the policies below.

Policy for Provisional Certification:

- Candidates must sit for the exam no more than 12 months prior to graduation
- The provisional certification expires 12 months after test date if no high school diploma/GED is submitted to the NHA by the candidate
- The provisional certification cannot be renewed or reinstated until it is converted to a full certification by providing the documentation to the NHA of education and/or work experience.
- Once the provisional certification is converted to a full certification, the expiration date will follow the initial testing date and all requirements for continuing competency to renew the certification will be required.

A provisional certificate issued by the NHA will be clearly marked with a provisional watermark. Provisionally certified candidates will have a "P" associated with their certification number and can be verified as such through the NHA candidate verification system accessible on the NHA website (www.nhanow.com).

B. Registration

Certification exams are offered in paper/pencil or computer-based at approved NHA test sites for students enrolled in those programs. Candidates not enrolled in a school program that meet the eligibility requirements and wish to challenge the NHA Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam may register online and sit for the exam at PSI/Lasergrade test locations; there are currently over 550 PSI/Lasergrade test locations throughout the country. Candidates interested in sitting for an NHA certification exam should register online at the NHA website (www. nhanow.com). Registration requires payment in full for the exam, the cost of which is posted on the website.

C. Code of Ethics

Candidates certified by the NHA are expected to abide by the following Code of Ethics.

Professionals certified through the NHA, have a duty to:

- To use best efforts for the betterment of society, the profession, and the members of the profession.
- Uphold the standards of professionalism and be honest in all professional interactions.
- Continue to learn, apply, and advance scientific and practical knowledge and skills, stay up to date on the latest research and its practical application.
- Participate in activities contributing to the improvement of personal health, society, and the betterment of the allied health industry.
- Continuously act in the best interests of the general public.
- Protect and respect the dignity and privacy of all patients.

The NHA reserves the right to take disciplinary action against a candidate's certification for documented violations of the Code of Ethics or for the following reasons:

- 1. Cheating or collaboration on the exam. If credible evidence of a candidate's misconduct is found, their certification will be placed in a pending state until an investigation is complete. Any right to retake the exam may be forfeited.
- 2. Unauthorized use of any NHA proprietary materials and or copyright infringement with regards to exams, study guides and any other materials distributed as property of the NHA.
- 3. Behavior that disregards the safety and rights of the patient.
- 4. Material misrepresentation or fraud in any statement to the NHA or to the public, including but not limited to statements made to assist the applicant, certificant, or another to apply for, obtain, or retain certification.

5. Any violation of the law as defined by individual states. This includes but is not limited to felonies (Class A-E). If an examinee or a certified NHA member has been convicted of a felony or been disciplined by a regulatory board and they wish to be considered for either exam registration or continuing education, individuals must submit court documents for consideration.

D. Cancellations

There are no refunds offered on certification exams unless the scheduled exam date is cancelled by the NHA. However, the exam fee may be transferred over to a new date for up to six months from the original date. All exams must be rescheduled a minimum of 24 hours in advance to avoid additional costs.

E. Special Accommodations (ADA)

If a special accommodation for testing due to disability or other reason is required, please consult our ADA Policy in Section V. of this document.

F. English as a Second Language

The exam is written in the English language. At this time there are no exams available in other languages. Translation assistance, including dictionaries, is not permitted during the exam.

G. Study Materials

Applicants may choose to receive the NHA Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam Study Guide electronically or in print. Study guides are available on the NHA website where current pricing is listed. PLEASE NOTE: the purchase of an NHA Exam Review is not required. Candidates are strongly encouraged to review the Medical Administrative Assistant exam outline as a guide to material on the exam.

H. Grandfathering

The NHA Certification Board will not "grandfather" another certification, i.e., accept another organization's certification or alternate pathway in lieu of meeting the certification requirements or for waiving a passing decision on the Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam examination. All candidates must take and pass the NHA Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam to receive certification.

I. Retaking the Exam

Candidates who fail the exam will have two chances to retake the exam. Candidates must wait at least one month before retaking an exam. Candidates that are unsuccessful after these two attempts will be required to wait one year before testing again. This year should be used to remediate and prepare for the exam. Candidates may utilize the appeal process to request a waiver of this requirement.

4. EXAMINATION INFORMATION

A. Exam Format and Administration

Candidates will be expected to validate their identity with a current government-issued photo ID. A copy of this ID may be kept.

Candidates will be expected to attest to meeting the eligibility requirements, upholding the profession's Code of Conduct and agreeing to the exam copyright and confidentiality policies.

1) General testing guidelines

- Eating or drinking in the testing room will not be allowed unless deemed necessary due to a documented medical condition.
- Use of beepers, radios, cellular phones, watch alarms, translators, dictionaries, and all other electronic devices are prohibited in the testing room. All electronic devices must be in the OFF position.
- Test misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated, examples of which include, but are not limited to: consulting textbooks or notes; discussing or reviewing any items on the exam with anyone else during the exam period; and talking to other students during the exam. If the exam proctor suspects anyone of talking or cheating during the exam, the proctor has the right to stop the exam. Candidates may be required to retake the exam at full price, if allowed to retest.

- Candidates should answer every question on the exam. Test results will be sent to candidates via mail.
 Please do not call the office for results; the NHA will not release grades on the telephone. Please allow approximately 30 days after the test date.
- The proctor will not answer any questions once the exam begins.

2) Paper/Pencil Exam

All exams will be proctored. Proctors are trained to follow specific requirements to maintain exam security and uniformity of the testing experience. Examinee instructions for taking the paper and pencil exam will be provided on site. Candidates should be aware of the following requirements:

- ONLY A #2 PENCIL may be used.
- The candidate's full name, test ID and social security number must be clearly printed on the answer sheet in the appropriate boxes, as well as on the sign-in sheet along with a complete mailing address. A complete mailing address is required to process the exam and certification.
- Candidates should review the answer sheet for completeness and clarity.
- On the testing date and at the scheduled time, the candidate's identity is verified against a current government-issued photo ID and is checked in by the proctor. The identification must be clear and legible. The name on the photo identification must be the same as on the original registration. If the names are different, then a certified or notarized copy of a marriage license, divorce decree, adoption papers or other legal documentation of name change must be provided. If the address on the government-issued photo identification is different from that supplied at the time of registration, the candidate must show proof of address, such as a current utility bill.

3) Proctored Internet testing

The general process for the internet-based exam includes:

- Prior to the exam, the NHA will provide a letter to the testing site that lists all of the examinees who have
 enrolled, the organizational codes, the examinee's e-mail address and their password. For security purposes.
- On the testing date and at the scheduled time, the examinee's identity is verified against a current government-issued photo ID and is checked in by the proctor. The identification must be clear and legible. The name on the photo identification must be the same as on the original registration. If the names are different, then a certified or notarized copy of a marriage license, divorce decree, adoption papers or other legal documentation of name change must be provided. If the address on the government-issued photo identification is different from that supplied at the time of registration, the candidate must show proof of address, such as a current utility bill.
- Candidates complete the testing using the internet-delivered exam. Candidates should review for completeness.

4) PSI/Lasergrade testing

The general process for testing at PSI/Lasergrade centers includes:

- Testing at the PSI/Lasergrade centers is a computer-based exam offered during business hours and some
 evenings and weekends.
- A demonstration of the PSI/Lasergrade software used for the exam is shown on the PSI/Lasergrade website at http://candidate.psiexam.com. A brief practice/demonstration session is available for candidates to practice on the computer before the exam actually starts. This is not a practice exam but a demonstration of the software interface.
- Candidates are given an opportunity to comment on any item that they believe is ambiguous, inaccurate or deficient. Candidates are also asked to complete a brief survey at the end of the exam to rate the exam registration procedures, the testing facility and the testing experience. This information is reviewed by test development staff and referred as necessary to the Governing Committee/Board.
- Upon arrival at the PSI/Lasergrade test center, candidates will be required to present a current valid government-issued photo ID (e.g. valid passport or driver's license). The identification must be clear and legible. The name on the photo identification must be the same as on the original registration. If the names are different, then a certified or notarized copy of a marriage license, divorce decree, adoption papers or other legal documentation of name change must be provided. If the address on the government-issued

photo identification is different from that supplied at the time of registration, the candidate must show proof of address, such as a current utility bill.

B. Exam Content

The content of the Medical Administrative Assistant Certification examination was established through a practice analysis survey. Practicing medical administrative assistants were asked to rate the importance of job tasks/performance objectives. The results from the survey were used to determine the domain of eligible content for the exam and the weight given to each major content area.

Medical Administrative Assistant Certification exam candidates please note: NHA has recently completed a new practice analysis survey and plans on implementing a new content outline based on these results. Candidates planning on sitting for the exam prior to June 1, 2012, should study and be familiar with the following test plan:

NHA Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA) Test Plan (Prior to June 1, 2012):

- Articulate the main roles and responsibilities of the Medical Office Assistant, including administrative, clinical and general.
- Identify different types of medical institutions and medical offices.
- Understand personal/professional, medical/legal and bio-ethical standards, and the importance of safeguarding confidentiality.
- Define acceptable office behavior, including proper telephone etiquette and the importance of patient sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Define medical malpractice, abandonment, fraud and abuse to distinguish among the five drug schedules of controlled substances
- List procedures for scheduling and referring patients, and handling walk-in emergency patients
- Identify and discuss at least three important interpersonal skills
- Identify and become familiar with the various types of written correspondence in a medical office
- Create a block-style letter that conforms to all formatting requirements
- Understand what is required to create and submit a medical bill.
- Define a Release of Medical Information, Explanation of Benefit, Assignment of Benefit, and Electronic Remittance Advice.
- Develop an understanding of the term HMO, and be able to interpret the information contained on the patient's insurance card.
- Define the terms and distinguish among: Express, Implied and Informed Consents.
- Understand the financial terms and procedures involved in operating a medical office practice, including Income, Expense, Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Cash and Accrual Accounting, Write-off Adjustments.
- Define safety and infection control standards and procedures in a medical office.
- Demonstrate awareness of HIPAA Compliance, Confidentiality Laws, PHI.
- Create a personal Resume and Cover Letter incorporating the new medical office skills and concepts developed through this course.

Total exam time allowed prior to June 1: 1 hour and 45 minutes

Total Number of Questions on Examination prior to June 1: 100 multiple choice items

Medical Administrative Assistant Certification exam candidates please note: NHA has recently completed a new practice analysis survey and plans on implementing a new content outline based on these results. Candidates planning on sitting for the exam after June 1, 2012, should study and be familiar with the following test plan.

NHA Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA) Test Plan (After June 1, 2012):

1. Office Procedures, 50 items

- A. Office Procedures Related to People, 10 items
 - 1. Greet patients and other visitors appropriately
 - 2. Screen and triage patients and other visitors, and after ascertaining their purpose, route them to the appropriate team member who is notified of their arrival
 - 3. Interrupt scheduled appointments for an emergency and explain to the others waiting
 - 4. Explain to new patients the policies and procedures of the practice
 - 5. Check in and escort patients and others to the appropriate rooms
 - 6. Check out patients at the end of the visit
- B. Office Procedures Related to Scheduling, 10 items
 - 1. When behind schedule for the day, explain to those waiting the type of delay to expect (reschedule if requested), call later appointments to reschedule
 - 2. Place courtesy calls to scheduled patients to confirm appointment date and time
 - 3. Mail reminder letters to established patients to schedule an appointment
 - 4. Maintain files of all patient cancellations and no-shows
 - 5. Call patients with later appointments to fill in for days cancellations
 - 6. Schedule follow-up visits
 - 7. Print out and review with team members, appointment schedules for the day
 - 8. Schedule time for patients to review and amend their medical records
 - 9. Create and/or print encounter forms for the days scheduled patients
- C. Office Procedures Related to Financial Documents, Correspondences, Files, Forms, and Other Records, 26 items
 - 1. Mail or have new patients, at time of first visit, complete all required paperwork/forms, then input/file/scan in the newly created medical record
 - 2. Ensure that all forms are complete, copy picture identification and insurance card and obtain all required signatures
 - 3. Update patient information for their records as dictated by the office policies and procedures
 - 4. Obtain and/or transmit needed information for referrals and consultations including third party payer requirements
 - 5. Receive, triage and route to appropriate team members, all incoming calls and/or place outgoing calls
 - 6. Take phone messages and route to the appropriate team member
 - 7. Forward incoming emails to appropriate team members
 - 8. If an incoming call or email requires a visit, schedule a visit or advise according to established protocols
 - 9. Maintain a file of all incoming and outgoing calls
 - 10. Arrange for patient diagnostic and therapeutic procedures, hospital admissions, consultations, referrals
 - 11. Take dictation and transcribe business and personal correspondence
 - 12. Transcribe dictations/drafts of medical histories, orders, and other parts of the medical record
 - 13. Compose and/or type correspondence (e.g.,memos, letters, reports, invoices, forms, financial statements, case histories, medical records) and route or transmit to the appropriate team member via mail, fax or e-mail

- 14. Proofread and/or edit incoming transcription
- 15. Proofread and/or edit outgoing office correspondence
- 16. Sign for packages, open, sort, and/or process mail and intra-office/facility correspondences
- 17. Prepare and mail outgoing clinical specimens
- 18. Gather data needed to complete statutory reports of regulatory and insurance agencies
- 19. Complete and/or edit statutory reports of regulatory and insurance agencies
- 20. Distribute information in various formats over mail services, email, fax, websites, telephone, etc
- 21. Print out for provider and other team members requested reports and other analyses of data
- 22. Maintain records for the office (e.g., parking spaces, phones, pc inventory, credit card transactions, office keys, passwords, etc.)
- 23. Pull current/stored files needed for days activities, then re-file after inputting any additions to the file
- 24. Make copies of requested materials for team members, regulatory agencies, third party payers, patients and allowed others and track appropriately
- 25. Follow appropriate protocols regarding legal requests/subpoenas for medical records
- 26. Perform computer backup of the days' activities D. Office Procedures Related to Healthcare Team Members and Community Resources, 2 items
 - 1. Answer questions orally and in written formats or route questions to the appropriate team member
 - 2. Place job need advertisements as directed
 - 3. Distribute team member work and project schedules
 - 4. Present patients with community resources
- E. Office Procedures Related to Healthcare Information Research and Presentation, 2 items
 - 1. Arrange and/or make travel arrangements for meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars
 - 2. Track and confirm attendees of the sponsored meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars
 - 3. Compile information required by team members for patient care, articles, presentations, speeches, reports, or conference proceedings, etc
 - 4. Assist in the creation of patient care articles, presentations, speeches, reports, or conference proceedings projects and save/back up the work in the appropriate format

2. Financial Procedures, 30 items

A. Financial Procedures Related to the Policies of the Organization, 10 items

- 1. Explain the financial policies and procedures of the practice to new patients and/or guarantors
- 2. Mail or have new patients, at time of first visit, complete all required paperwork/forms then input/file/scan in the newly created financial record
- 3. Note on the account if guarantor and patient are not the same $\,$
- 4. Obtain signed documentation (eg, advanced beneficiary for Medicare) of financial responsibility as dictated by third party payers
- 5. Abstract from medical and financial records information needed for clean claim submission to third party payers
- 6. Abstract information needed from the medical and financial records required by outsourced business associates to submit claims or to correct errors found

- B. Financial Procedures Related to the Cash Flow of the Organization, 20 items
 - 1. Secure and process all monies owed by patient at check in or check out
 - 2. Maintain fee schedules for the practice
 - 3. Explain all changes to the fee schedule and/or to the financial policy of the practice to established patients
 - 4. Purchase initial and/or restock, receive, and organize inventory of medications, medical equipment and supplies
 - 5. Purchase initial and/or restock, receive, and organize inventory of office supplies, machinery and software
 - 6. Post patient payments to appropriate records/screens and reconcile the days financial transactions
 - 7. Complete and submit appropriate insurance forms
 - 8. Follow up on suspended, nonpayment, and payment denials of claims from third party payers
 - 9. Process and verify all credit card transactions
 - 10. Deposit into the bank account of the practice, monies received for the day and reconcile the transactions
 - 11. Create and mail patient statements/bills as well as other invoices for monies due to the practice
 - 12. Answer questions related to bill statement or non-coverage by third party payer
 - 13. Explain and arrange payment options, process the financial forms/agreements (eg, promissory notes, truth in lending)
 - 14. Collect required information for presentation of hardship/charity cases to provider
 - 15. Follow up with calls and letters for unpaid and/or late payments from third party payers and guarantors
 - 16. Prepare checks for signatures and post in the register invoices received by business associates, affiliates and other vendors
 - 17. Maintain file of paid and unpaid invoices
 - 18. Perform and/or follow up on bad debt, skip trace
 - 19. Maintain basic bookkeeping and petty cash
 - 20. Receive, reconcile, and post remittance advice or explanation of benefits from third party payers and apply payments appropriately

3. Risk Management, 20 items

- A. Risk Management Related to People, 5 items
 - 1. Maintain files on team members professional status (eg, licensure or certification, continuing educational requirements, renewal dates, fees and dues)
 - 2. Schedule time with the provider and other team members to resolve internal operational needs

- 3. Note on the appointment schedule, times provider will be out of the office
- 4. Arrange for coverage for those times providers will be out of the office and maintain a method to contact provider when required
- 5. File in the correct patients medical and/or financial record all diagnostic results, procedural reports, and other correspondences received after verification from the appropriate team member
- B. Risk Management Related to Compliance, 15 items
 - 1. Train and/or provide orientation to new employees in office policies and procedures to ensure compliance with regulatory agency guidelines
 - 2. Train current employees in updated office policies and procedures to ensure compliance with new regulatory agency guidelines
 - 3. Monitor compliance with office policies and procedures
 - 4. Monitor compliance with regulations of the insurance plans in which the provider(s) is/are participating
 - 5. Monitor compliance with local, state, and federal regulations
 - 6. Participate in committees to ensure compliance and to implement changes as needed to the policy and procedure manual of the organization
 - 7. Obtain and follow all third party payer requirements to treat the patient (eg, hospital admission, diagnostic and therapeutic procedures)
 - 8. Obtain signature for informed consent document
 - 9. Witness signature of informed consent document
 - 10. Maintain required paperwork with the appropriate regulatory agencies related to having the medications, medical supplies and equipment on the premises
 - 11. Participate in internal audits of the organizations business records
 - 12. Participate in internal audits of the medical records
 - 13. Participate in verifying the rationale during external audits
 - 14. Maintain schedule for archiving and destroying expired medical records and other correspondences
 - 15. Report and follow up on all questionable activities that have potential legal or ethical ramifications
 - 16. If original medical records leave the premises, document who, what, where, when and why then follow up for the return
 - 17. Follow up on all outsourcing activities done by business associates of the practice to ensure compliance

Total exam time allowed after June 1: 1 hour and 50 minutes

Total Number of Questions on Examination after June 1: 110 multiple choice items

C. Exam Scoring

The NHA Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam is designed to assess the competencies of the medical administrative assistant and award the NHA Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam credential only to those medical assistants competent in the knowledge and abilities to perform the duties of a medical assistant safely and effectively.

Paper and pencil exam answer sheets are scanned and software is utilized to score the answer sheets and record the results electronically. Online exams are scored immediately by the web-based testing software and record the results electronically. All exam data is stored on the NHA's own servers. Exam scores (name, overall score, passing decision)

will be sent to the candidate's home address within approximately 3-5 business days after completed answer sheets are received by NHA. Score results include a letter that reports the candidate's score and if they passed or failed. If a candidate doesn't receive a passing score, the letter includes information regarding retaking the exam. If a candidate passed, they also receive a wallet sized certification ID card and certificate with the NHA seal as proof of certification.

D. Recertification

The purpose of recertification is to promote high standards of practice for clinical medical assistants, to encourage continued competency in the field and promote safe and effective patient care. It is required that all certificants who wish to maintain their credential complete the necessary continuing education.

The NHA recertification program supports the professional medical assistants' desire to stay current in their field of expertise. The health care field is in constant change and the certified medical administrative assistant must keep up with those changes. Therefore the NHA requires recertification every two years to stay current in the discipline, through evidence of at least 10 continuing education credits in every two year cycle.

The Certification Board believes a two year period reflects a duration that accommodates the rate by which new information, skills and techniques are introduced into the medical assistant field.

Continuing education credits may be acquired through the NHA Continuing Education Program or through other outside educational programs or institutions. The NHA reviews credits based on the following criteria: current events, industry trends, and relevance to the allied health care field. If the credit meets any or all of the criteria, the credit will equal half the number of hours in attendance.

Submission of continuing education credits and fees can be submitted to the NHA annually or at the end of the two year certification period. Upon recertification, the certificant will receive a new wallet-sized ID card and certificate.

All recertification documents and fees must be submitted to the NHA national office by the certification's expiration date, with a one month grace period. The required pieces are: 1) evidence of 10 continuing education credits and 2) annual fee of \$79.50 per year (\$159 total).

Should a certification expire, reinstatement (recertification) is permitted within one year of the expiration date. If reinstatement is initiated within one year of the expiration date, the person must submit:

- A completed recertification application
- Evidence of 15 continuing education credits
- Annual fee of \$79.50 per year (\$238.50 total for the three years), and
- \$99 reinstatement fee.

After one year from the expiration date, reinstatement is not permitted and a person must apply and again take the Medical Administrative Assistant Certification Exam to become certified.

5. OTHER EXAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Special Accommodations (ADA)

Candidates with documented disabilities may submit an accommodations request form. Any accommodations will be granted in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Upon request, the NHA shall make reasonable accommodations to assist candidates with disabilities. Special accommodations can be provided for individuals with documented disabilities by submitting an Accommodations Request form available on the NHA website (www. nhanow.com), along with the supporting documentation listed on the form.

Accommodations will be provided to qualified candidates with disabilities to the extent that such accommodations do not fundamentally alter the examination, create an unfair advantage, or cause an undue burden to the NHA or partner testing agent. The cost of excessive accommodation requirements is to be borne by the candidate (i.e., electronic communication equipment, etc.). Exams will not be translated into foreign languages, and interpreters will not be permitted to translate the examination.

B. Nondiscrimination Policy

The NHA does not discriminate or support the discrimination of or against any individual on the basis of gender, ethnicity, background, age, religion, marital status, national origin or physical disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.

C. Confidentiality Policy

Confidential information (non-public information including, but not limited to, name, address, social security number, bank account numbers, financial or financial aid information, student numbers, medical information, certification numbers, etc.) are protected by federal, state and local statutes, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). To protect privacy, the database of personal information is accessible only by designated staff and contractors operating under a nondisclosure agreement. This database may also be used in aggregate (such as pass rates, number of certificants, score trends, etc.) for the purposes of research reports and other published data. Schools may receive upon request to the Compliance Office various aggregate statistical information, such as regional or national score averages and pass/fail rates for school accreditation purposes.

Candidate information including certification, registration and testing information will remain confidential, with the exclusion of whether a candidate has a current/active certification, i.e., "certification status". Unless required by law, written authorization by the candidate is needed to release test score information. Additionally, test scores will not be provided over the phone. This policy helps to maintain confidentiality for the student and helps ensure accuracy of results.

A new verification system is available to any health care professional or member of the general public wishing to verify a candidate's credential. This functionality is accessible on the NHA website (www.nhanow.com) and requires the input of a candidate's last name, certification number and expiration date. The system will return a positive confirmation for any candidate that holds an NHA credential.

D. Disciplinary Policy

The NHA has established a code of ethics and guidelines in order to protect the public and the profession and certificants agree to follow the code of ethics and guidelines. The NHA reserves the right to revoke a member's certification for the following reasons:

- 1. Cheating or collaboration on the exam. If credible evidence of a candidate's misconduct is found, their certification will be placed in a pending state until an investigation is complete. Any right to retake the exam may be forfeited.
- 2. Unauthorized use of any NHA proprietary materials and or copyright infringement with regards to exams, study guides and any other materials distributed as property of the NHA.
- 3. Behavior that disregards the safety and rights of the patient.
- 4. Material misrepresentation or fraud in any statement to the NHA or to the public, including but not limited to statements made to assist the applicant, certificant, or another to apply for, obtain, or retain certification.
- 5. Any violation of the law as defined by individual states. This includes but is not limited to felonies (Class A-E). If a candidate or a certified NHA member has been convicted of a felony or been disciplined by a regulatory board and they wish to be considered for either certification or recertification, individuals must submit court documents for consideration along with a completed Appeals Form which is available on the NHA website (www.nhanow.com).

If a consumer or other party reports an incident involving an examinee or certified member of the NHA, the examinee/certified member of the NHA will be notified of the report by registered mail. The examinee/certificant must provide a written response to the NHA Disciplinary and Appeals Committee within 15 days of receiving the letter. Upon review of the report, any supporting evidence, and the examinee's/certificant's response, the Committee will determine if further investigation is warranted. Upon the conclusion of any resulting investigation, the Committee shall determine whether grounds for disciplinary action exist and, if so, what disciplinary action should be taken. The Committee shall notify the charged member of their decision by certified U.S. mail, return receipt requested. If applicable, the charged member shall also be notified of his/her right to appeal.

E. Eligibility Appeals

The NHA reserves the right to deny certification applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements as set forth by the NHA Certification Board. Appeals to a denied application must be submitted in writing within 30 days of receiving the notice of ineligibility and must include an explanation for consideration. Eligibility appeals will be reviewed by the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee. The Committee shall notify the candidate of their decision in written form. Appeals may be filed by submitting an Appeals form.

F. Exam Question Challenges

Questions about the examination content, passing standard or specific items will be accepted and reviewed as part of NHA's quality control processes, but are not considered an acceptable reason to appeal the exam results and no formal actions will be taken. Any formal challenges must be submitted in writing to the NHA within 5 business days of the completion of the exam. The NHA does NOT provide an individual response to all challenges; however, every challenge is considered individually and acted on accordingly. Exam challenges may be faxed to NHA, Attn.: NHA Appeals Department, 913-661-6241, or may be sent via overnight courier to the following address: National Healthcareer Association, Attn.: NHA Appeals Department, 7500 West 160th, Stilwell, KS 66085

Correspondence must be signed by the candidate and include:

- Candidate's full name
- Complete contact information (Address, Phone, Email)
- Exam taken (e.g. Phlebotomy, Clinical Medical Assistant, etc)
- Date taken
- Location taken
- Specific item comments

G. Violation of Exam Procedures

If there are any deviations from standard testing policies, or if candidates or proctors witness improper behavior by a proctor, instructor or other candidate, NHA should be notified as soon as possible. Incidents involving instructors and examinees should also be brought to the proctor's attention at the time of the exam. Examinees experiencing such incidents may appeal exam results. An Incident Report must be submitted on the designated Incident Report form and must include an explanation of the incident and how it negatively impacted performance. The NHA will need verification of the event to render a decision. The report will be reviewed by the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee and will be responded to in written form. The decision of the Certification Board is final. Any notifications of the incident must be made within thirty (30) days of examination to: Attn: Compliance, NHA, 7500 160th, Stilwell, KS 66085.

H. Appealing Decisions

The Disciplinary and Appeals Committee is a subcommittee of the Certification Board and is appointed by the Chair of the Certification Board. Decisions of the Certification Board Disciplinary and Appeals Committee may be appealed by the individual on the following grounds only:

- The NHA Disciplinary and Appeals Committee violated its policies and procedures for processing complaints of ethical violations.
- The decision of the Committee was arbitrary and capricious and was not supported by the materials provided by the complainant and the charged member.
- The sanctions imposed are inconsistent with or disproportional to the violations found.

After the charged person has received written notification of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee's decision, the person may appeal the Committee's decision within thirty (30) days by sending a written response to Attn: Compliance, NHA, 7500 W. 160th St., Stilwell, KS 66048. This appeal will be reviewed by the Certification Board.

The Certification Board will render a decision regarding the appeal and deliver the verdict in writing. The Certification Board is limited to the following types of decisions:

- Upholding the decision of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee;
- Upholding the decision of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee, but altering sanctions. These sanctions will be outlined in the letter.
- Reversing the decision of the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee; Appeal decisions by the Certification Board are final and are not subject to further appellate review.

I. Rescoring (Hand Scoring)

For security reasons, candidates will not be able to review their exam or obtain information on particular test questions. Although it is highly unlikely that a rescoring will result in a change of scores, any examinee who feels

that there was an error in exam grading and wants his/her exam rescored by hand must submit a written request with reasoning. There will be an additional fee of \$25.00 (payable with Money Order) assessed for rescoring. Within 60 days of the examination date, the examinee must send the written request to: National Healthcareer Association, Attn: Processing Dept., 7500 160th Street, Stilwell, KS 66085.

Letters must be signed by the candidate and include:

- Candidate's full name
- Complete contact information (Address, Phone, Email)
- Exam taken (e.g. Phlebotomy, Clinical Medical Assistant, etc)
- Date taken
- Location taken
- Specific item comments

J. Record Retention

The purpose of the NHA's Record Retention policy is to ensure that necessary records and documents are adequately protected and maintained and to ensure that records that are no longer needed or of no value are discarded at the appropriate time. The NHA requires that its records be maintained in a consistent and logical manner and be managed so that the NHA:

- 1. Meets legal standards for protection, storage and retrieval;
- 2. Protects the privacy of its members and those associated with the NHA;
- 3. Optimizes the use of space;
- 4. Minimizes the cost of record retention; and
- 5. Destroys outdated records in an appropriate manner.

The NHA Certification Board maintains a current list of certificants and provides verification of certification status to the general public accessible on the NHA website. Electronic candidate records are kept on file indefinitely and are not destroyed. In the event an individual's certification has lapsed, the records are still maintained in the database under "inactive" status. Electronically, the Certification Board will indefinitely maintain candidate personal information, scores, type of certificate, expiration dates and recertification information.

The item pool and master exam forms will be stored indefinitely in an electronic format as will be exam development documents such as the JTA Reports, Standard Setting Reports and item analyses. The item pool and master electronic exam forms are stored on password protected NHA servers and is accessible only by the exam development team and shared with subject matter experts as needed for item development and review.

Paper pencil booklets are destroyed once answer sheets are scored.

Paper Pencil answer sheets are stored as follows:

- Sent to Iron Mountain for storage one month after received by the NHA office
- At the time they are received by Iron Mountain for storage, all paper pencil answer sheets are scanned and digital copies are loaded onto a disc which NHA will retain for 7 years
- Paper answer sheets will be retained by Iron Mountain for one year after the date they accepted into storage.

Continuing Education documentation is stored as follows:

• External CE documentation (non-NHA provided) is scanned. Digital copies are retained by NHA for 7 years. Paper copies are kept in long term storage for one year.

NHA produced CE is kept with the candidate information electronically; original paper documentation is retained for one month.

All documents related to the research and development of an exam are retained permanently. All compliance related documentation (accommodations requests, disciplinary reports, appeals, security issues, and Certification Board activities) are retained permanently.