

MA vs CNA

MEDICAL ASSISTANT OR CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT WHICH ONE IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Medical Assistants often work in medical offices and healthcare settings, whereas Certified Nursing Assistants work in long-term care, nursing homes or hospitals. While some aspects of these careers seem similar, when you look more closely, you'll see that there are many differences to consider.

CAREER COMPARISONS

MEDICAL ASSISTANT (MA)

MAs are instrumental in helping patients feel at ease in the physician's office and often explain the physician's instructions. Medical Assistants sometimes perform medical office administrative duties as well as their clinical tasks. Medical assistants are essential members of a patient-focused medical team.

Where they work: Most medical assistants work in physicians' offices, hospitals, outpatient clinics, and other healthcare facilities.



The core functions of the job may include:

- Taking medical histories
- Explaining treatment procedures to patients
- Preparing patients for examination
- Assisting the physician during exams
- Collecting and preparing laboratory specimens
- Performing basic laboratory tests
- Instructing patients about medication and special diets
- Preparing and administering medications as directed by a physician
- Transmitting prescription refills as directed
- Drawing blood
- Taking electrocardiograms
- Removing sutures and changing dressings

IMPORTANT QUALITIES:

- Analytical skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Detail oriented
- Technical skills

CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT (CNA)

CNAs assist patients with daily activities and while some have differing responsibilities. CNAs also serve as a conduit between patients and nurses and doctors and record and communicate all issues to medical staff. Other duties might include transporting patients and setting up equipment at a nurse or doctor's request.

Where they work: CNAs, sometimes called nursing aides, help provide basic care for patients in hospitals and residents of long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes.



The core functions on the job include:

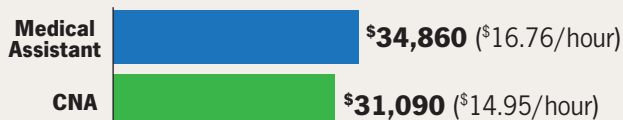
- Maintaining hygiene and care for patients
- Serve meals and help patients eat
- Take vital signs
- Collect information about conditions and treatment plans from caregivers, nurses and doctors
- Provide and empty bedpans
- Lift patients into beds, wheelchairs, exam tables, etc.
- Answer patient calls
- Examine patients for bruises, blood in urine, or other injuries/wounds
- Clean and sanitize patient areas
- Change bed sheets and restock rooms with necessary supplies

IMPORTANT QUALITIES:

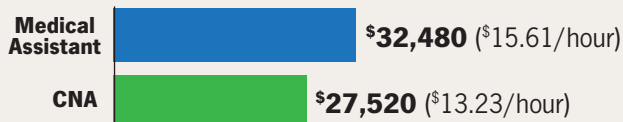
- Communication skills
- Patience
- Compassion
- Physical stamina

A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

2018 Colorado annual salary comparison

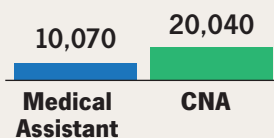


2018 U.S. annual salary comparison

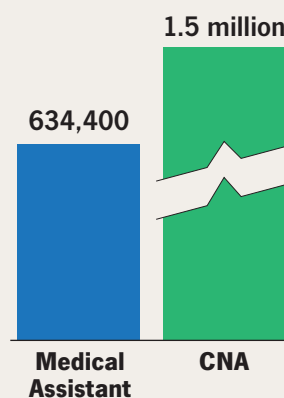


Number of employed MAs and number of employed CNAs

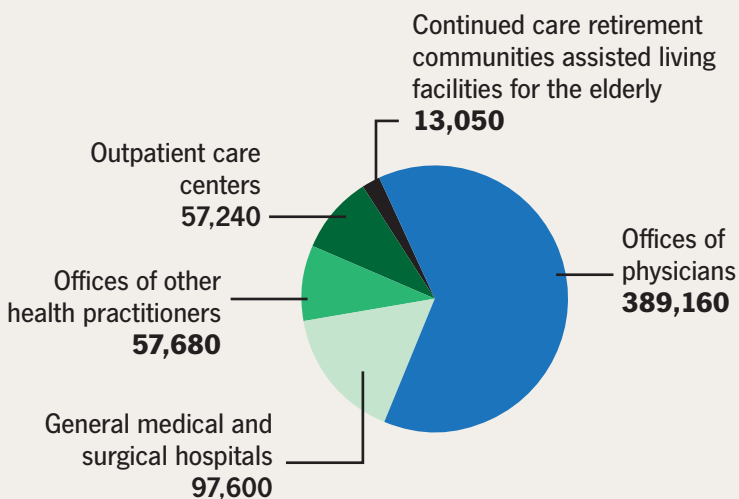
In Colorado



Nationwide



Where MAs work



Where CNAs work

