

Physician Office Assistant (POA)

Total Program Cost (no prerequisites required): \$2,295
332 Total Program Hours

The POA educational program prepares the student for an entry-level position in an outpatient healthcare setting such as a medical practice or health-related call center. Students will become familiar with the general workflow of an outpatient medical practice, gain an understanding of medical insurance, and will be exposed to basic PC skills and the basic use of electronic medical records. Students will then put the newly acquired knowledge to use when performing a 160-hour, unpaid practicum experience. Critical thinking concepts and customer service skills and activities will be infused throughout the curriculum, as will generational and cultural diversity, where appropriate. Reference textbooks are provided for students to use during class.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- Interview with Healthcare Education/Workforce Development staff
- 18 years of age and High School Diploma or GED
- Typing speed of 30 wpm (will be tested at time of HACC interview)
- Satisfactory background checks completed within 1 year prior to start of the practicum
 - Pennsylvania Criminal History Record Check
 - Pennsylvania Child Abuse History Record Check-Department of Human Services (formerly DPW)
 - Federal Criminal Background Report-Cogent Systems
- Health Requirements (all must be completed within 1 year prior to start of practicum)
 - Physical Exam
 - 10 Panel Urine Drug Screen
 - PPD (one step or two step depending on practicum site)
 - Current Immunization

PROGRAM CURRICULUM

Courses are completed in the following sequence. Students attend class from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday with a 30 minute lunch break.

Introduction to Healthcare 18 hours

This course serves as an introduction to allied health professions. The course reviews the US healthcare delivery system and identifies roles within that system. The course also introduces the student to concepts of cultural diversity, healthcare law and ethics, Universal Precautions, HIPAA, stress in the workplace, professionalism, communication and interpersonal relations and strategies for becoming a successful healthcare employee.

Medical Office Operations 45 hours

This course includes an introduction to oral communication with increasing competence as a communicator in interpersonal contexts. A study of formal and informal communications between individuals with emphasis on developing more effective communications skills as it pertains to customer service will be included. In addition, the course will cover procedures for conducting common office tasks in a diverse healthcare office environment spanning the entire patient encounter (from first telephone contact to office discharge and follow-up). These tasks include handling incoming and outgoing mail, as well as other documents, the use of proper telephone techniques, proper business etiquette and time management and critical thinking skills. Simulation software is included in the curriculum, includes exercises for greeting patients and dealing with difficult patients. Course will include approximately 1-2 hours of presentations by local healthcare system personnel to discuss employment expectations in a healthcare setting. It will familiarize students with the interaction between technology and patient care in order to achieve positive patient outcomes.

Introduction to Medical Insurance 36 hours

The course provides a review of insurance and third-party payment systems. Focus will be on government programs. An introduction to medical coding (ICD-9, ICD-10, and CPT), including coding guidelines, description of coding systems, and overview of how to read tabular list. A basic overview of CMS1500 claims reporting will also be provided. Medical laws and ethics pertaining to health information and HIPAA will be reviewed and discussed. Proper disclosure of health information will be reviewed. Additional topics include legal issues, resources, managed care contracting, fee schedules and electronic data systems.

Patient Triage for the Physician Office Assistant 45 hours

This course services as an introduction to human wellness and disease to include the most commonly encountered clinical disorders in a medical office setting. The Physician Office Assistant will learn to utilize a decision tree while screening patient calls, assuring immediate response and quality patient care. The course is taught on a system-to-system basis with the inclusion of scenarios applicable to telephone screening. Medical terminology and abbreviations are infused throughout the course curriculum. There will be a clear definition of scope of practice as it pretains to the Physician Office Assistant who is screening patient calls and that of the other members of the healthcare team.

Introduction to Healthcare Applications 28 hours

This course serves as an introduction to the fundamental understanding of computer hardware and software. The course will require students to develop an understanding of practice management software, electronic health records (EHR) and to recognize and demonstrate an understanding of relevant computer terms. The course will cover Microsoft Office Navigation, Windows functions, proper use of the World Wide Web as well as the components of proper email communication and confidentiality as it relates to healthcare.

Practicum (Primary care practice, specialty practice, and patient call center (if one is available)) 160 hours

The student will spend a total of 160 hours in a variety of outpatient healthcare settings: a primary care practice, specialty medical practice setting and a patient call center (if one is available) within a local healthcare system. The practicum allows the student to experience the role of a physician office assistant in these three settings. The collaborating healthcare system will determine the number of hours spent in each of these areas; however, to meeting the learning outcomes of the program the student must have a minimum of 8 hours in each setting.

NOTE: Practicum locations are scheduled at the discretion of the collaborating healthcare system and as their need dictates based on when the program is held.

**HACC reserves the right to change the curriculum at any time based upon program needs.*

Email nchealth@hacc.edu if you have additional questions.

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