



# SOUTH CAROLINA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (SCMA) CMA EMPLOYER TRAINING PROGRAM GUIDE

## On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program

South Carolina law expressly allows physician practices to develop and administer their own training programs for Certified Medical Assistants (CMA) without requiring employees to attend external schools, provided the program aligns to an approved national certification examination. As set forth in South Carolina Code §40-47-20(e), training must:

- Be delivered in whole or in part by a healthcare employer; and
- Align with a nationally accredited certification examination approved by the South Carolina Board of Medical Examiners and the Board of Nursing.

To support physician practices in meeting these requirements, the South Carolina Medical Association (SCMA) has developed this Employer Training Program (ETP) Guide that outlines the components taught within the practice and provides standardized documentation to record the training delivered.

<b>Approximate duration</b>	Training and OJT documentation alongside active employment for one year to meet NHA supervised work experience required. The NHA may allow for a period of less than one year with prior approval of a program through the NHA.
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The SCMA does not evaluate individual employees and cannot determine exam eligibility, predict examination outcomes, or guarantee certification. Responsibility for employee supervision, training execution, and competency validation remains with the employing physician practice.

## OJT Program Aligns with the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) Exam

The OJT Program is mapped to the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) exam, which is an approved national certification test under South Carolina law. Alignment with the NHA CCMA in no way requires an employee to take the NHA Exam.

## Additional Qualifying Tests

There are several national certification exams that satisfy the CMA credentialing requirement under SC law. SCMA built this ETP Guide around the NHA CCMA exam because it provides an on-the-job training pathway compatible with employer-delivered programs like this one — making it the most natural fit for employees trained under this Guide. However, the employee may sit for any approved exam they meet the eligibility requirements for. As of 4/1/26, the approved testing organizations are: (1) American Association of Medical Assistants; (2) National Center for Competency Testing; (3) American Medical Certification Association; (4) American Medical Technologists; (5) National Healthcareer Association; (6) MEDCA; and (7) AAH.

See Step 4 for important information about confirming eligibility requirements with your chosen testing organization before scheduling an exam.

## What Subsection (e) Requires — and What It Doesn't

The law is explicit: a subsection (e) program must be “delivered, in whole or in part, by a health care employer.” The practice itself must be the one delivering the training. Sending an employee a link to a non-accredited third-party online course does not satisfy this requirement. If a program can be accessed by anyone with an internet connection, independent of employer involvement, the employer is not delivering it — that is functionally enrolling the employee in an external program, which must meet the accreditation standards of subsection (a).

A compliant employer-delivered program requires the practice to:

- › Actively structure and supervise the training on the job (third parties may assist on-site, but the employer must be directing the program);
- › Assign and document competency tasks aligned to a nationally accredited certification exam;
- › Maintain records of completion, supervisor sign-off, and skill verification; and

- › Ensure the employee obtains valid national certification accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies or another accreditation body recognized by the Board of Medical Examiners and the Board of Nursing.

### Why Documentation Matters

If a CMA's credentials are ever scrutinized — by the Board of Medical Examiners, a malpractice insurer, a credentialing body, or a payer audit — the practice must be able to clearly demonstrate how that employee was trained and qualified. The SCMA ETP Guide provides a structured, documented framework aligned to a nationally accredited certification examination. Practices are encouraged to document all competencies taught and retain completed program materials in each employee's personnel file.

### Legal Disclosure

This ETP Guide was prepared by SCMA as the curriculum framework document to meet the standards set forth in §40-47-20(e) demonstrating compliance with on-the-job training. The law does not require the SC Board of Medical Examiners and SC Board of Nursing or other body to approve OJT Programs. Accordingly, this documentation has been provided based on current information available and aligned with the NHA CCMA Test Plan and criteria. This ETP Guide does not constitute legal advice but provides a framework to document on-the-job training.

The OJT Program curriculum framework and exam domain alignment references in this Guide are based on the NHA Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) Test Plan, developed from a job task analysis completed in 2022 and effective since January 10, 2024. The CCMA Test Plan is published by the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) and is available at no charge at nhanow.com. Domain names, subdomain references, and knowledge statement numbers (k1–k222) cited throughout this document are drawn from that public document. SCMA's curriculum content, module descriptions, competency task statements, and OJT framework are original works developed by SCMA and are not reproduced from NHA's commercial study materials, practice tests, or any other proprietary NHA product.

## SECTION 1 — SCMA PROGRAM PACKAGE TIERS

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Tier 3 — Enterprise (multi-site / system-wide)	Contact SCMA	Contact SCMA
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### Tier 1 — Independent Practice License | \$500 Member / \$1,000 Non-Member

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## SECTION 2 — STEPS TO COMPLETE

### Step 1 — Complete the OJT Program Competency Checklist

The OJT Program Competency Checklist formally documents skills aligned with the national NHA CCMA for the employer training portion. Work through all OJT competency areas in Section 3. The supervising physician or designated clinical supervisor signs off on each area once the employee has demonstrated the skill correctly — recommended minimum of three separate patient encounters for task domains and confirmed instruction for knowledge domains. This is the employer-delivered component that satisfies SC statute pathway (e). See Section 3 for detailed instructions on how to complete the checklist.

#	Domain	Items	OJT Coverage Type
1	Foundational Knowledge and Basic Science	15	Knowledge — Trainer instruction
2	Anatomy and Physiology	8	Knowledge — Trainer instruction
3	Clinical Patient Care	84	Task — Observed performance
4	Patient Care Coordination and Education	12	Task — Observed performance
5	Administrative Assisting	12	Task — Observed performance
6	Communication and Customer Service	12	Task — Observed performance
7	Medical Law and Ethics	7	Knowledge + Task — Instruction and observed behavior
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>150</b>	

Domains 1, 2, and 7 are knowledge-based — no hands-on task is required. These are covered in the OJT setting through trainer-led instruction, discussion, and review in the context of actual practice operations. The trainer's signature documents that instruction occurred. Outside of the OJT setting, an employee can utilize NHA study materials (available 24/7) to further prepare for the exam. Note that self-study is not 'OJT' and should only supplement the main program that is taught in the practice.

### Step 2 — Purchase and Complete NHA Study Materials (not required)

An employer may choose to assign self-study as needed at [nhanow.com](https://nhanow.com). The NHA CCMA study guide and/or practice test may complement the ETP Guide as it was built off of the NHA CCMA practice test.

It may be helpful to have employees complete at least one full practice test to ensure they are prepared for the NHA CCMA Exam, especially if they have not taken an exam recently. The NHA practice test provides Review Focused Review® results and addresses weak domains to assess before scheduling the exam.

Item	What It Includes	Approx. Cost*
<b>NHA CCMA Online Study Guide</b>	Interactive study guide aligned to current CCMA test plan; EHR simulations, practice activities, patient experience coaching, professionalism videos, flashcards, audio reader, annotation tools; self-paced 24/7 access	\$69
<b>CCMA Practice Tests (3 tests, 2 attempts each)</b>	Three full-length online practice exams; each allows 2 attempts; includes Focused Review® — personalized study plan identifying performance by domain	\$49
<b>Study Guide + Practice Test Bundle</b>	Online study guide + practice test set + Focused Review® in one purchase; also available with printed study guide shipped to student	\$94

### Step 3 — Compile Compliance Documentation for Employee

Before an employee takes the NHA CCMA Exam, gather the following information and retain copies of the documentation in the employee's personnel file:

- Completed and signed OJT Competency Checklist (Section 3)
- Payroll records or work log confirming 12 months of cumulative supervised MA work in the past 3 years; or 2 years of supervised work experience in a medical assisting field within the last 5 years
- If utilized, NHA study material completion documentation (practice test score reports or results showing readiness across all domains)
- Employer verification letter on practice letterhead confirming the employee's dates of employment and supervised training role (required for NHA exam application)
- Program Completion Certificate (at end of packet) filled out with copy to employee, copy in personnel file.

This information is your practice's documented evidence of a structured, compliant training program if credentials are ever audited.

#### Step 4 — The Employee Should Apply for and Take an Approved CMA Certification Exam

SC law requires the employee to obtain national certification from one of the approved testing organizations listed in the Additional Qualifying Tests section of this Guide. The employee may sit for any exam on that approved list that they meet the eligibility requirements for.

**SCMA recommends the NHA CCMA Exam** for employees who completed this ETP Guide, as the Guide's curriculum, competency framework, and knowledge statements are mapped directly to the NHA CCMA Test Plan. Employees using this Guide who also utilize NHA study materials will find the strongest alignment between their on-the-job training and their exam preparation.

If utilizing the NHA CCMA, the employee or employer can set up an account at [nhanow.com](http://nhanow.com). Signing up requires uploading an employer verification letter stating the employee has been in training for one year, and paying the exam fee. Testing occurs via live remote proctoring or at an approved testing site. Passing score: 390/500 (78%). Employees may retake the CCMA exam after a 30-day waiting period. A third attempt requires a 12-month waiting period.

#### ⚠ Important — Exam Eligibility Varies by Testing Organization

Each approved national certification exam has its own eligibility requirements, and not every employee will qualify for every exam. Requirements vary by testing organization and may include minimum hours of supervised work experience, completion of a formal education program, or other prerequisites. **This ETP Guide satisfies the employer-delivered training pathway under SC Code §40-47-20(e), but it does not guarantee eligibility for any particular exam.**

Before scheduling an exam, the employee and employer should confirm the employee meets all eligibility requirements directly with the chosen testing organization. The NHA CCMA Exam is the exam this Guide is aligned to, and its eligibility pathway — which includes on-the-job training combined with supervised work experience — is well-suited for employees trained under this program. Other approved exams may require completion of an accredited school program and may not accept employer-delivered OJT as a standalone pathway.

*SCMA makes no representation regarding eligibility determinations, which are made solely by the testing organization.*

<b>NHA CCMA exam fee</b>	\$165 Exam (pricing as of 4.1.26 - confirm current pricing at <a href="http://nhanow.com">nhanow.com</a> )
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#### Step 5 — Recertification Every Two Years

CCMA certification must be renewed every two years. NHA requires 10 CE credits a year (20 hours total). An employee can become a member and have access to NHA's online CE library. NHA tracks CE progress and deadlines automatically for members.

## SECTION 3 — OJT COMPETENCY CHECKLIST: ALL NHA CCMA DOMAINS



The OJT component documents the employer-delivered training of the program and satisfies the 'in whole or in part by a health care employer' requirement of SC statute pathway (e). This checklist covers all seven (7) NHA CCMA exam domains. Domains 3, 4, 5, and 6 are task-based — the employee must perform each task under supervision. Domains 1, 2, and 7 are knowledge-based — the trainer reviews and instructs each topic area with the employee in the practice.

The supervising physician's signature on each competency area creates the documented training record that protects the practice. Sign-off is competency-based, not time-based. For task domains, a minimum of three documented patient encounters is recommended. For knowledge domains, trainer signs that instruction and discussion occurred. The statute provides no mandatory hour minimums.

### EMPLOYEE & PRACTICE INFORMATION

<b>Employee Name:</b>	<b>Practice Name:</b>
<b>Position / Title:</b>	<b>Supervising Physician:</b>
<b>Training Start Date:</b>	<b>Training Completion Date:</b>

### CHECKLIST LEGEND

 <b>Task Domain (Blue Header)</b>	Employee must perform the task under observation in the practice. Recommended minimum: 3 patient encounters. Trainer initials confirm observed competency.
 <b>Knowledge Domain (Green Header)</b>	Trainer reviews and instructs the knowledge area with the employee. No hands-on patient encounter required — instruction and discussion in the practice satisfies OJT coverage.
<b>KNOWLEDGE COVERED (green-shaded row)</b>	Supporting knowledge grouped under each task domain — trainer confirms the underlying knowledge was reviewed and discussed in the practice, not just the physical task.
<b>Key Study Guide Topics column</b>	Identifies the NHA CCMA Study Guide content corresponding to each task or knowledge area. Directs employees to the right study material to reinforce what they encounter on the job.

### HOW TO COMPLETE THIS CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Performed</b> / <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reviewed column</b>	Place a checkmark (✓) in this box when the task has been completed to your satisfaction. For task domains, check after 3 successful patient encounters. For knowledge domains, check after instruction is complete.
<b>Trainer Initials column</b>	The supervising physician or designated clinical trainer writes their initials in this column to confirm (a) they directly observed the employee performing the task (task domains), or (b) they reviewed and discussed the knowledge topic with the employee in the practice (knowledge domains).

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