

MEDICAL ASSISTING (MA) DEPARTMENT & PROGRAM REVIEW (2025-26)

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Section 1: Report on Previous Goals & Requests

Previous APR Goal	What Happened (support with data/evidence)
Redesign the Medical Assisting (MA) program structure to reduce time to completion while maintaining accreditation standards.	The program implemented a Career Pathway Certificate of Completion (CPCC), a 35-credit MA core certificate, eliminating prerequisite coursework to allow students to enter the workforce more quickly. At the same time, the program retained the traditional one-year MA certificate option, which includes prerequisite coursework, providing students with multiple pathways based on their educational goals and readiness. This dual-pathway model was intentionally designed to meet urgent regional workforce needs and respond directly to employer feedback, including from St. Charles Health System (SCHS), regarding the demand for well-prepared, entry-level MAs. Both pathways maintain full compliance with the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB) accreditation standards while reducing time and financial barriers for students who choose the accelerated option. As a result, students are able to select the pathway that best supports their academic preparation and career goals, complete the program efficiently, and transition into high-demand healthcare roles. This approach supports student economic mobility while strengthening the regional healthcare workforce and maintaining program quality and rigor.
Increase student enrollment and improve access to the program	The program expanded access by launching the MA program at the Madras campus, creating a second delivery location in addition to the Bend campus. This expansion directly supports increased enrollment, improved geographic access for rural students, and responded to regional workforce demands. As a result, overall program capacity grew substantially. For the 2025–2026 academic year, the combined cohort enrollment between the Bend and Madras

	campuses reached 42 students, representing continued growth beyond previous cohort highs. This expansion reflects both strong student interest and employer demand, while advancing the College's goals related to access, workforce development, and regional service.
Strengthen recruitment and outreach efforts through external partnerships	The program collaborated with regional partners and benefited from the creation of a Health Careers Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator position. Outreach included high school engagement, workforce organization partnerships, and community events, which collectively supported increased awareness and enrollment.
Maintain high student success, certification pass rates, and employment outcomes.	Student success in core MA courses remained consistently high (over 90%). National Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) exam pass rates exceeded accreditation benchmarks and national averages (around 76%), with 96% pass rates over five years and multiple cohorts achieving 100%. Positive placement rates reached 100%, reflecting strong employer demand.
Address instructional staffing and lab capacity needs	The program successfully strengthened instructional capacity through the addition of a full-time tenure-track MA faculty position in 2020–2021, followed by a third full-time tenure-track faculty position to support the launch of the Madras campus in 2025–2026. The Madras campus implementation included dedicated laboratory and classroom space, enabling the program to expand to a second location while maintaining accreditation standards and instructional quality. At the Bend campus, however, the planned remodel to convert an existing lab bay into an additional closed check-off room was not accomplished. While the program has continued to meet instructional and accreditation requirements within existing space, the lack of an additional check-off room remains a limitation given increased enrollment and cohort size. This unmet space need continues to impact scheduling flexibility and student practice opportunities and remains a priority for future planning.

Section 2: Fulfilling Your Mission

The mission of the COCC MA program is to prepare competent entry-level MAs in the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective learning domains, in alignment with CAAHEP accreditation standards. Since the last academic program review, the program has fulfilled this mission through intentional program redesign, expanded access, and sustained instructional quality while responding to evolving workforce and community needs.

A central expression of this mission has been the implementation of a CPCC, a 35-credit MA core certificate designed to reduce barriers to entry and accelerate students' transition into the healthcare workforce. By eliminating prerequisites while maintaining accreditation standards, the program responded directly to employer feedback (including from SCHS) regarding urgent workforce demand. These changes increased accessibility while preserving rigor and patient safety.

The program further fulfilled its mission by expanding to a second delivery location at the Madras campus, improving access for rural and underserved students. For the 2025–2026 academic year, combined enrollment across the Bend and Madras campuses reached 42 students, reflecting both strong student demand and regional workforce need. This expansion was supported by the addition of a third full-time tenure-track faculty member and the establishment of dedicated lab and classroom space at the Madras campus, ensuring instructional quality and compliance with accreditation standards.

Despite growth, the program has maintained exceptional student outcomes. Success rates in core MA courses consistently exceed college averages, national CMA exam pass rates remain well above accreditation benchmarks, and positive placement rates continue to approach 100%. These outcomes reflect strong curriculum design, faculty expertise, cohort-based instruction, and close alignment with clinical partners.

Medical Assistant Statistics

Below is a table which shows the outcomes of the COCC Medical Assistant program as reported to the Medical Assisting Education Review Board (MAERB) on the program's 2025 annual report.

Cohort Year	Retention	Job Placement	Credentialing Exam Passage	Graduate Satisfaction	Employer Satisfaction
2024	71%	95%	100%	100%	100%
2023	92%	90%	97%	100%	100%
2022	97%	90%	90%	100%	100%
2021	100%	93%	96%	100%	100%
2020	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Five-Year Average	93%	93%	96%	100%	100%

**Numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number*

While the Bend campus has continued to operate within existing lab space, the previously planned remodel to add an additional closed check-off room was not completed. Even so, the program has

continued to meet student learning and accreditation requirements, demonstrating adaptability and strong stewardship of resources.

Overall, the MA program's evolution since the last APR reflects a clear commitment to its mission: expanding access, responding to employer and community needs, and preparing highly competent medical assistants to serve Central Oregon.

Section 3: College Goals and Initiatives

Since the last APR, the Medical Assisting program has played a significant role in advancing COCC's institutional priorities related to workforce development, access, equity, and regional service. Program decisions and growth have been intentionally aligned with college and strategic plan goals.

The redesign of the MA program into a streamlined CPCC directly supports COCC's workforce development mission by accelerating students' entry into high-demand healthcare roles. This employer-informed approach reflects the College's commitment to aligning academic programs with regional labor market needs and supporting economic mobility for students.

The expansion of the MA program to the Madras campus represents a meaningful contribution to COCC's access and rural service goals. By offering the program in a second location, COCC increased educational access for students who may not otherwise be able to attend the Bend campus due to geography, transportation, or work and family obligations. The resulting increase in total cohort enrollment to 42 students in 2025–2026 demonstrates both demand and impact.



The College's investment in two full-time tenure-track MA faculty positions (one added in 2020–2021 and another in 2025–2026) reflects institutional support for instructional excellence, program sustainability, and student success. These investments have enabled program expansion while maintaining small cohort instruction, accreditation compliance, and high-touch student support.

In winter of 2026, the COCC MA program collaborated with SCHS to offer a two-week boot camp for newly hired pre-certified MAs. This boot camp provided training to individuals who may or may not have had any medical background, to perform a limited scope of practice in order to bridge the large gap of their MA employment openings. COCC faculty provided short lectures with hands-on experience to these individuals such as law and ethics, interviewing patients, exam room turnover, vital signs, and EKG training.

During that same time frame, a new collaboration began with SCHS to launch an additional certified cohort of the program in a condensed format. Rather than the traditional three-term program, we developed a two-term option beginning in summer 2026, with graduates completing the program in fall 2026. The courses (typically offered over ten weeks) will be condensed into four 5-week blocks, with students attending campus two days per week and completing the remainder of the program asynchronously online. SCHS has committed to sponsoring ten students in this two-term cohort, covering all tuition and fees. In addition, the COCC MA program is partnering with Mosaic Medical to support six students through the same two-term format, with Mosaic also covering their tuition and fees.

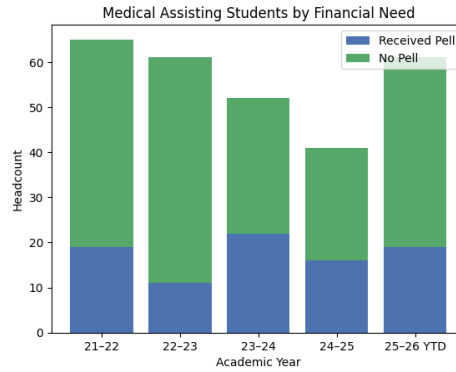
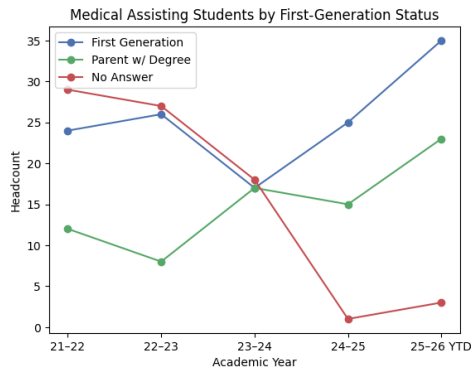
The program also supports college-wide equity and inclusion efforts through outreach, advising collaboration, and a student population that reflects higher representation of students of color compared to COCC overall. Participation in Health Careers Expos, Skilled Trades Fairs, workforce partnerships, and culturally responsive curriculum further supports institutional equity goals.

Together, these efforts demonstrate how the MA program actively contributes to COCC's strategic priorities through responsive program design, regional partnership, and sustained student success.

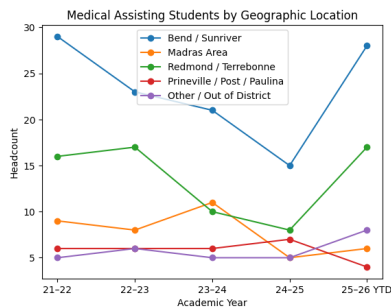
Section 4: Diversity and Inclusion Insights

Reviewing Institutional Effectiveness data for the MA program offers a meaningful opportunity to better understand the students we serve and the strengths they bring to the learning environment. Across multiple dashboards, the data reflect a student population that includes a high proportion of first-generation students, students with financial need, learners from rural and outlying communities, and a wide range of ages. Together, these patterns reinforce the program's role as an accessible pathway to economic mobility and meaningful careers in healthcare.

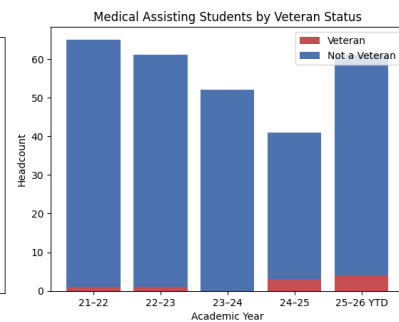
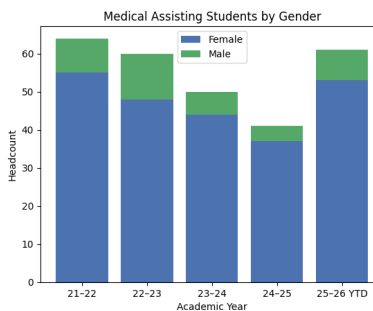
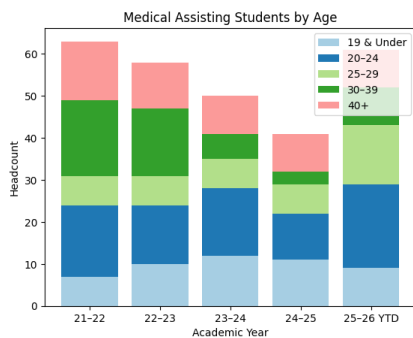
First-generation students continue to make up a substantial portion of MA enrollment, with recent cohorts showing steady growth. Many of these students are navigating higher education for the first time while balancing work, family, and financial responsibilities. The MA program's cohort model, clear structure, and strong faculty presence help create a supportive environment where students feel connected, encouraged, and able to persist. Similarly, Pell Grant data indicate that a significant number of MA students experience financial need, underscoring the importance of flexible scheduling, accelerated pathways, and consistent communication.



Geographic data highlight the program's growing regional impact. While many students reside in Bend and Sunriver, a notable number come from Madras, Prineville, Redmond, La Pine, and surrounding rural communities. The recent addition of the MA program at the Madras campus represents an important step toward reducing geographic barriers and expanding opportunity for students who may otherwise face challenges related to transportation or distance.

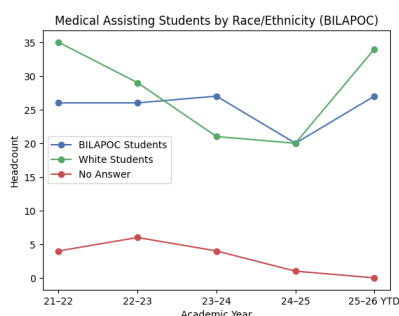


Age data further reflect the diversity of the MA student population, with representation across traditional and non-traditional age groups. Many students are career changers or returning learners seeking stability and purpose in their work. Gender data continue to show a predominantly female population, which aligns with the profession nationally, while also offering space to explore future outreach strategies that invite broader participation. Veteran enrollment remains small, suggesting an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and awareness.



Disaggregated race and ethnicity data show that BILAPOC students consistently represent a significant portion of the MA program's enrollment across academic years. Even as overall cohort sizes fluctuate, participation among BILAPOC students has remained relatively stable, reflecting the program's role in

expanding access for historically underrepresented students. When viewed alongside strong course success, certification pass rates, and positive placement outcomes, the data suggest that BILAPOC students are well supported once they enter the program. Continued collaboration with advising, financial aid, and equity-focused support services will help sustain these outcomes and further reduce barriers prior to program entry.



A clear strength of the MA program is the level of equity achieved once students enter the cohort. High success, retention, certification pass rates, and positive placement outcomes suggest that the program’s instructional design and student-centered approach are working well. Challenges remain primarily prior to program entry, where academic preparation, financial pressures, and life circumstances can impact persistence.

Faculty can continue learning about equity gaps by engaging with disaggregated data, participating in professional development, and collaborating closely with advising and student support services. Through ongoing reflection and care-centered practices, the program remains well positioned to support MA students in achieving their educational and career goals.

Section 5: Strengths and Accomplishments

One of the greatest strengths of the Medical Assisting (MA) program is its ability to combine high-quality outcomes with expanded access, while remaining responsive to regional workforce needs. Since the last APR, the program has achieved several significant accomplishments that reflect instructional excellence, thoughtful growth, and strong community partnership.

A key accomplishment has been sustained student success and workforce outcomes, even as the program expanded. Core MA course success rates consistently exceed 90%, outperforming college-wide averages, and national certification outcomes remain exceptionally strong. Over multiple cohorts, CMA exam pass rates have averaged approximately 97%, well above accreditation benchmarks, with several cohorts achieving 100% pass rates. Positive placement rates have remained near 100%, demonstrating that graduates are well prepared and in high demand by local employers.

Another major strength is the program’s regional reach and access. Enrollment growth has been intentional and equity-driven, culminating in a combined 2025–2026 cohort of 42 students across the Bend and Madras campuses. The addition of the Madras campus expanded access for rural students and reduced geographic barriers, while maintaining program quality through dedicated lab and classroom space and the addition of a full-time tenure-track faculty member.

The program has also demonstrated innovation through strategic use of grant funding. The department was awarded a grant from the Keyes Foundation to install streaming classroom technology, allowing instruction to be shared between the Bend and Madras campuses. This investment supports equitable learning experiences, instructional consistency, and faculty collaboration across locations, ensuring students receive the same high-quality instruction regardless of campus.

The MA program along with other Health Sciences programs were awarded a grant from the Oregon Health Authority to provide tuition scholarships to students in rural communities. The MA program was lucky enough to award five students in our rural communities a scholarship for tuition and fees to complete the MA program. These students continue to be successful in the program with the reduced financial stress.

Strong cooperative workforce education (CWE) partnerships are another hallmark of the program. Students complete clinical hours in outpatient settings close to where they live, supporting retention and reducing transportation barriers. Key partners include SCHS, Central Oregon Pediatric Associates, Summit Health, High Lakes Health Care, Mosaic Medical, and numerous other clinics across Central Oregon. These partnerships ensure students receive authentic, hands-on experience while strengthening the local healthcare workforce.

Internally, the MA program benefits from strong collaboration with advising, admissions, financial aid, disability services, tutoring, testing, eLearning, and diversity and inclusion. The cohort model, combined with proactive advising and faculty engagement, contributes to high persistence once students enter the program.

Overall, the MA program's strengths lie in its student-centered design, consistently strong outcomes, innovative use of resources, and deep community partnerships. These accomplishments position the program as a model for workforce-aligned, equity-driven education within the College and the broader region.

Section 6: Challenges

As the MA program has grown and expanded access, several challenges have emerged that reflect the complexity of delivering a high-quality, hands-on healthcare program across multiple campuses while meeting employer expectations.

One ongoing challenge is the implementation of synchronous streaming instruction to the Madras campus. While streaming technology has expanded access and allowed instruction to be shared across Bend and Madras, ensuring that students at the remote site feel fully engaged, connected, and included remains a learning process for both faculty and students. Building a sense of cohort community, facilitating real-time interaction, and balancing attention across locations requires intentional instructional strategies and continued refinement. Although this model is still evolving, early feedback suggests that students are benefiting academically, and faculty continue to adapt practices to strengthen engagement and belonging.

Another challenge relates to variation in academic preparation, particularly for students who enter the CPCC without completing prerequisites. Some of these students initially struggle with higher-level anatomy and physiology concepts and medical terminology embedded in the MA curriculum. While this can require additional instructional support and scaffolding, it is important to note that overall student

success remains strong, with MA course success rates consistently exceeding 90% and certification and placement outcomes remaining high. This challenge highlights the need for continued academic support strategies rather than a deficit in student capability.

Staffing for laboratory instruction is a growing concern as enrollment increases. The combined Bend and Madras cohort reached 42 students in 2025–2026, requiring more intensive lab oversight to ensure safety, skill mastery, and accreditation compliance. Recruiting and retaining instructional assistants for labs has been difficult, as many qualified healthcare professionals must work full time in clinical settings and are unable to commit to part-time instructional roles. Additionally, compensation for instructional assistants is often not competitive enough to attract or retain consistent support.

Currently, the program relies on one consistent instructional assistant; however, best practice requires two instructional staff present in each lab, particularly as cohort sizes grow and employer expectations increase. This is especially important to meet workforce needs identified by key partners such as SCHS where graduates are expected to demonstrate strong clinical competence upon hire. Converting the instructional assistant role into an adjunct faculty position would provide greater stability, instructional consistency, and capacity to support students effectively. As of spring of 2026, the MA program has hired Robin Boivie as a part-time instructor to help cover lab activities and practicum. Going into AY 2026-2027, Robin will be an adjunct professor to lighten the load between all full-time faculty members.

Overall, these challenges reflect a program that is growing, adapting, and responding to demand. Continued attention to instructional support, faculty staffing, and student engagement across campuses will be essential to sustaining quality as the program moves forward.

Section 7: New Goals and Resource Needs

Goal	Timeline for achieving goal	Resources needed
1. Improve student engagement and inclusion in multi-campus, streamed instruction.	Ongoing	Faculty professional development focused on hybrid and synchronous teaching strategies Continued investment in instructional technology support
2. Sustain and formalize targeted academic support for students entering the program without prerequisites.	Ongoing	Continued funding and scheduling support for an embedded Integrated Education and Training (IET) specialist. Development of a structured, mandatory support model for students identified as needing additional assistance in anatomy, physiology, and medical terminology

3. Increase laboratory capacity at the Bend campus to support larger cohorts.	2027	Capital funding to remodel an existing lab bay into an additional closed check-off room
4. Strengthen instructional support for laboratory courses to ensure student safety, skill mastery, and accreditation compliance.	2026	Convert the current instructional assistant role into an adjunct faculty position
5. Sustain and deepen regional workforce and clinical partnerships.	Ongoing	Continued support for CWE coordination and partnership management

For each goal above, these are resources/support we are already pursuing (or have pursued):

1. Grant-funded streaming equipment; faculty collaboration across campuses.
2. Embedded IET specialist currently supporting the program; informal faculty referrals and early interventions.
3. Continued program-level advocacy.
4. The program currently benefits from one dedicated instructional lab assistant (supports both Bend and Madras campuses) who has expressed a strong interest in remaining with the program long term. While this consistency has been invaluable to student learning and lab operations, the current role does not fully align with the scope, responsibility, or instructional needs of the program. Transitioning this position into an adjunct faculty role would provide appropriate institutional support, improve role stability, and better meet the instructional demands of larger cohorts and expanded lab sections.
5. Active advisory board engagement and long-standing clinical agreements.