



**MedCerts**

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Case Study:

# **SOLVING** the **MEDICAL ASSISTANT** **SHORTAGE**

**MedCerts Helps UnityPoint  
Health Close the Medical  
Assistant Talent Gap**

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# UnityPoint Health Uses MedCerts to Upskill Employees and Address Medical Assistant Shortage

## Finding Medical Assistants is Especially Difficult

44% of medical practices say Medical Assistant is the hardest position to recruit for. There are an estimated 114,600 job openings for Medical Assistants each year.

Given the high demand, it's an ideal role to implement an Incumbent Upskilling program for recruiting. Additionally, with Medical Assistants receiving a median annual wage of \$42,000, the program represents upward mobility for many employees.

"We've tried other Medical Assistant programs, but they typically took around two years as students balanced work and their studies.

With the new program and MedCerts, employees can advance to Medical Assistant positions in just 14-16 weeks."



### TAURIE CURRY

Navigator, Career Pathways  
UnityPoint Health

## THE CHALLENGE



UnityPoint Health is a hospital network in Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin. They employ more than 32,000 compassionate and knowledgeable team members, with over 8 million patient visits each year. Their hospitals have received awards both for their patient care and social responsibility.

However, 85% of healthcare facilities have been dealing with a shortage of allied healthcare professionals. To maintain the high level of care UnityPoint Health patients expect and to fill vacancies faster, finding creative ways to increase the pool of qualified applicants became essential.



**Close the Skill Gap**



**Industry-Recognized Credentials**



**Time and Cost Effective**

## THE SOLUTION



UnityPoint Health (UPH) created Career Pathways, an innovative workforce development initiative to increase patient care career opportunities. Through MedCerts Partner Solutions, they offered an expedited online-based educational program for the high-demand allied health role of Certified Clinical Medical Assistant.

Current UPH team members were invited to apply. The tuition for students accepted was 100% subsidized by UnityPoint. Additionally, UPH supplied laboratory materials, academic support and paid all students a salary for 40 hours a week for the duration of the program.

The accelerated coursework featured MedCerts video-based instruction including virtual simulations and engaging games. It also included a 5-part clinical component administered by UnityPoint.

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## Upskilling a competitive advantage

A [Gallup/Amazon study](#) poll of healthcare workers found 53% are very interested in upskilling, and 55% would leave their current employer for an employer offering those opportunities.

Plus, there's [clear](#) cost savings. A 2017 American Board of Family Medicine study found the cost of medical assistant turnover was \$14,200 per person or 40% of their annual salary at the time.

"Thanks to the Career Pathways program, I was able to go from a UnityPoint Health receptionist to a certified clinical medical assistant in only 4 months.

It's changed my life a lot, and I'm very blessed and fortunate."



### ALYSSA EIFERT

Program Graduate,  
Unity Point Clinic  
Internal Medicine

## THE RESULTS

1

### 100% Completion Rate

3 cohorts or 39 students total have both started and finished the UnityPoint Health Medical Assistant Career Pathways Program since September 2023.

2

### Job Ready Faster

The program took 3-6 months to complete, with students finishing in as little as 14 weeks. All 39 students completing the program were promoted to Medical Assistants at UPH.

3

### 97% Employee Retention Rate

A year after the program began, only one participant no longer works at UPH, showing the program making a positive impact on employee retention.

## ALL STUDENTS CERTIFIED

The program also paid for 1 attempt at the Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA) certification examination, administered through the National Healthcareer Association. All 39 students passed the exam, the final step before being placed in open UPH Medical Assistant positions.

## SUPPLEMENTAL INCOME KEY

Career Pathways providing both tuition and supplemental income to program participants minimizes the risk for students wanting to start a career at UPH. Dedicated time was set aside during the normal work week for students to work on their MedCerts coursework instead of their current roles. For existing UPH employees looking for career advancement, there was literally no downside to participating.



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