

2019 Industry Outlook

nha 

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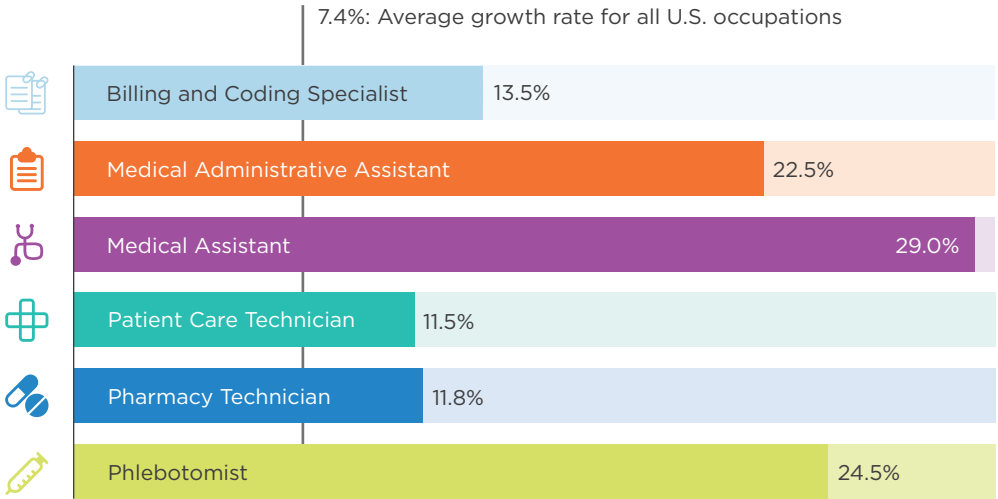
Allied health professionals, which make up more than 60% of the healthcare industry workforce, play a critical and often behind-the-scenes role in caring for patients and ensuring that the flow of patients operates efficiently within healthcare institutions. Our communities depend on well-trained allied health professionals to ensure timely, quality care for patients, but currently, most communities across the United States are experiencing a shortage in the workforce.

The growing demand for allied health workers places pressure on employers, who collectively believe that allied health professionals are critical to the success of their organizations. Employers understand the value that allied

health workers bring to each interaction in the healthcare setting, further underscoring the growing need to attract the best professionals into healthcare careers.

The 2019 Industry Outlook gathered insights and data from employers, seeking to understand the attributes of their most successful allied health professionals. This research sought to uncover actionable information for educating, hiring, developing and advocating for allied health professionals. Ultimately, this research sets the stage for making a change toward a better future, for allied health professionals and patients, alike.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects allied health professions will grow at rates that far exceed the U.S. average for all occupations



Employers' top three reasons why certification is important

1

Provides credibility

2

Improves the standard of care

3

Improves patient safety

Employer certification requirements by profession



Billing & Coding Specialist



Medical Administrative Assistant



Medical Assistant



Patient Care Technician



Pharmacy Technician



Phlebotomists

■ Required ■ Encouraged ■ Not Required ■ Unsure

Medical Assistant

Top 5 skills medical assistants need to develop, according to employers:

1

Clinical experience

2

Patient communication

3

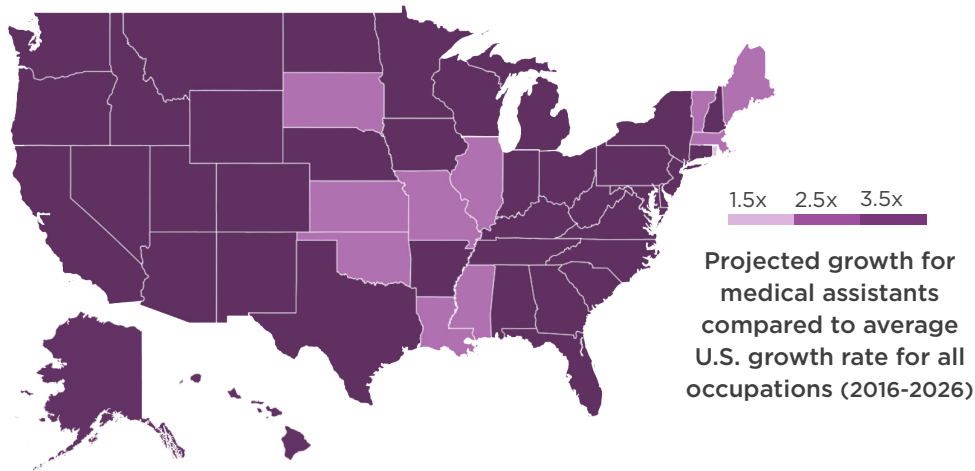
Critical thinking

4

Professionalism/
soft skills

5

Time management



Top methods employers are implementing to help improve communication skills

1. Continuing education

2. One-on-one mentorship

3. Online training

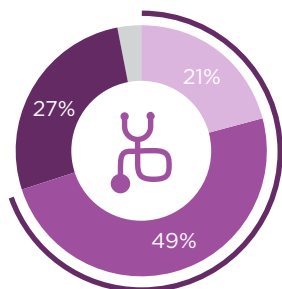
Top communication skills medical assistants need to develop

52%

Active listening

33%

Non-verbal communication/
body language



70% of newly certified medical assistants entering the workforce are prepared, according to employers

- Very prepared
- Prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not prepared

Phlebotomist

Top 5 skills phlebotomists need to develop, according to employers:

1

Clinical experience

2

Critical thinking

3

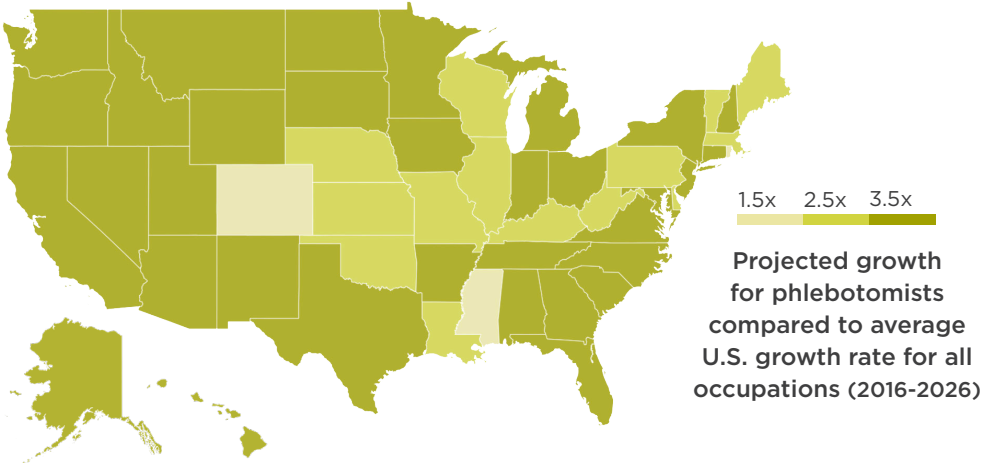
Patient communication

4

Professionalism/
soft skills

5

Safety/
compliance



Top methods employers are implementing to help improve communication skills

1. Continuing education

2. Online training

3. One-on-one mentorship

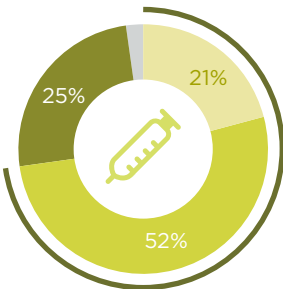
Top communication skills phlebotomists need to develop

51%

Active listening

34%

Non-verbal communication/
body language



73% of newly certified phlebotomists entering the workforce are prepared, according to employers

- Very prepared
- Prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not prepared

Patient Care Technician

Top 5 skills patient care technicians need to develop, according to employers:

1

Clinical experience

2

Critical thinking

3

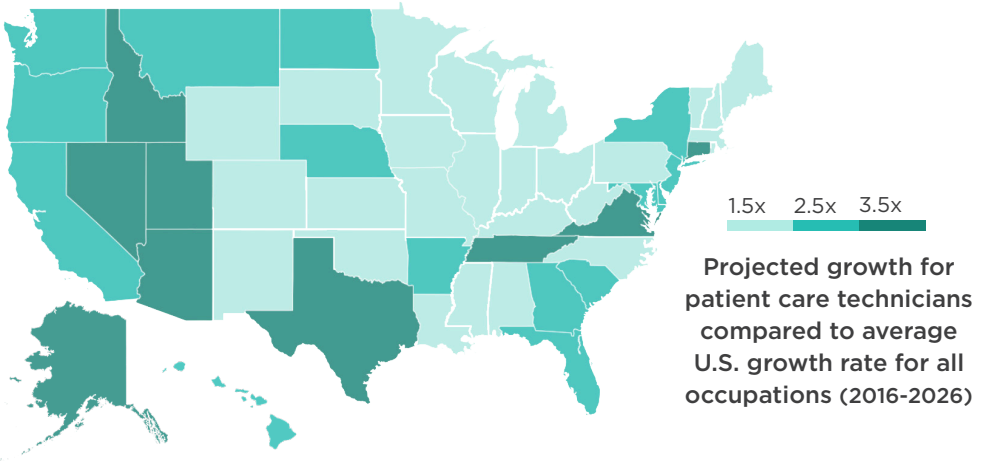
Professionalism/
soft skills

4

Patient communication

5

Safety and compliance



Top methods employers are implementing to help improve communication skills

1. Continuing education

2. One-on-one mentorship

3. Online training

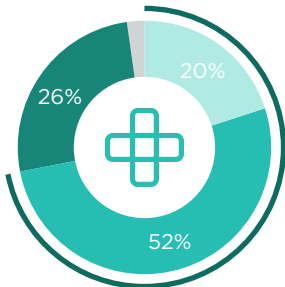
Top communication skills patient care technicians need to develop

53%

Active listening

35%

Non-verbal communication/
body language



72% of newly certified patient care technicians entering the workforce are prepared, according to employers

- Very prepared
- Prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not prepared

Pharmacy Technician

Top 5 skills pharmacy technicians need to develop, according to employers:

1

Clinical experience

2

Patient communication

3

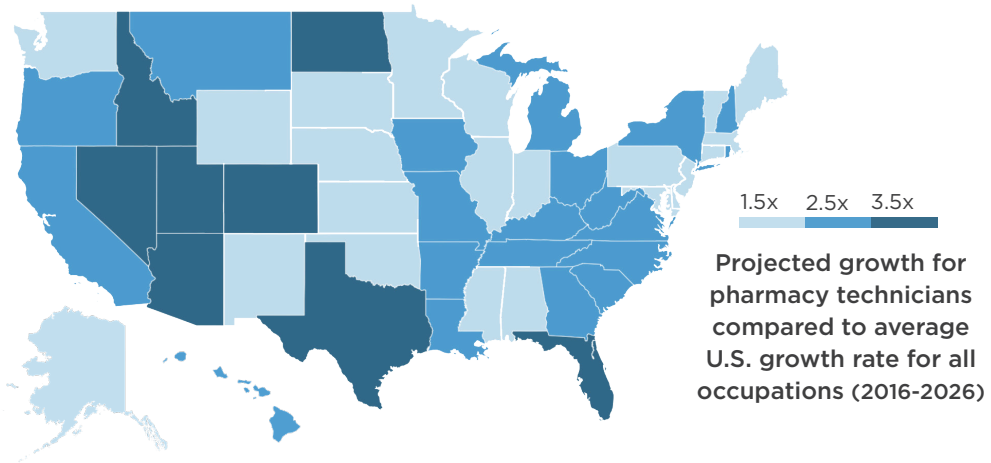
Critical thinking

4

Professionalism/
soft skills

5

Safety and compliance



Top methods employers are implementing to help improve communication skills

1. Continuing education

2. Online training

3. One-on-one mentorship

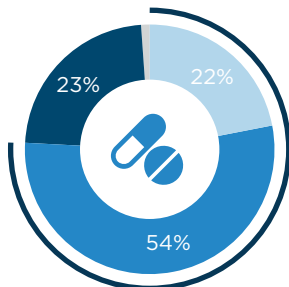
Top communication skills pharmacy technicians need to develop

50%

Active listening

32%

Non-verbal communication/
body language



76% of newly certified pharmacy technicians entering the workforce are prepared, according to employers

Very prepared
Prepared
Somewhat prepared
Not prepared

Medical Administrative Assistant

Top 5 skills medical administrative assistants need to develop, according to employers:

1

Clinical experience

2

Critical thinking

3

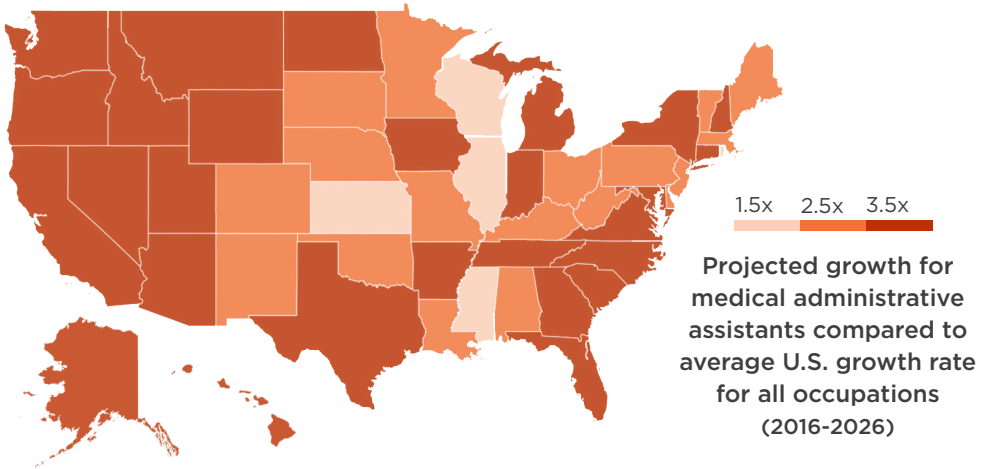
Patient communication

4

Professionalism/
soft skills

5

Safety and compliance



Top methods employers are implementing to help improve communication skills

1. Continuing education

2. One-on-one mentorship

3. Online training

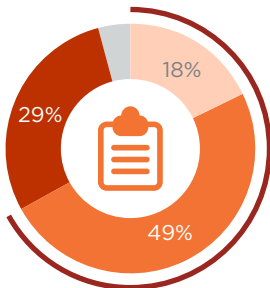
Top communication skills medical administrative assistants need to develop

49%

Active listening

34%

Non-verbal communication/
body language



67% of newly certified medical administrative assistants entering the workforce are prepared, according to employers

Very prepared

Prepared

Somewhat prepared

Not prepared

Billing & Coding Specialist

Top 5 skills billing & coding specialists need to develop, according to employers:

1

Clinical experience

2

Critical thinking

3

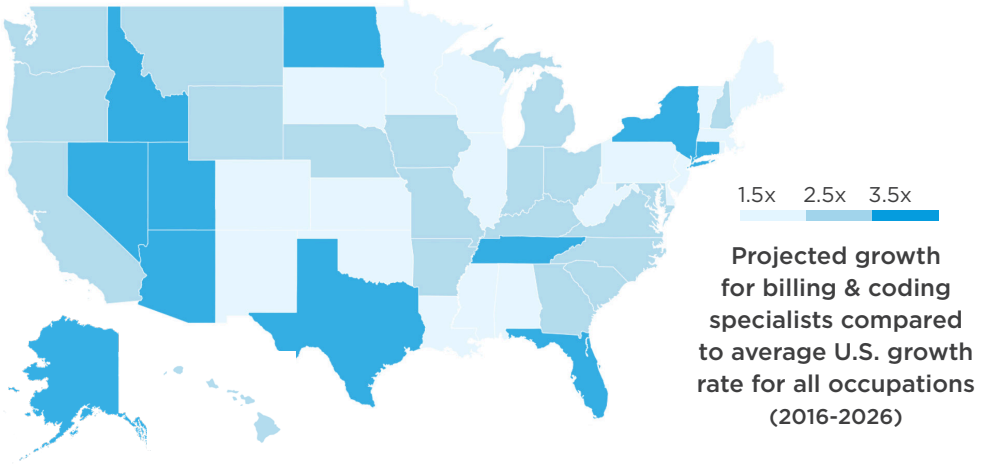
Patient communication

4

Professionalism/
soft skills

5

Time management

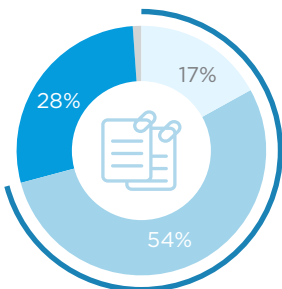


Top methods employers are implementing to help improve communication skills

1. Continuing education

2. One-on-one mentorship

3. Online training



71% of newly certified billing & coding specialists entering the workforce are prepared, according to employers

- Very prepared
- Prepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Not prepared

Top communication skills billing & coding specialists need to develop

49%

Active listening

31%

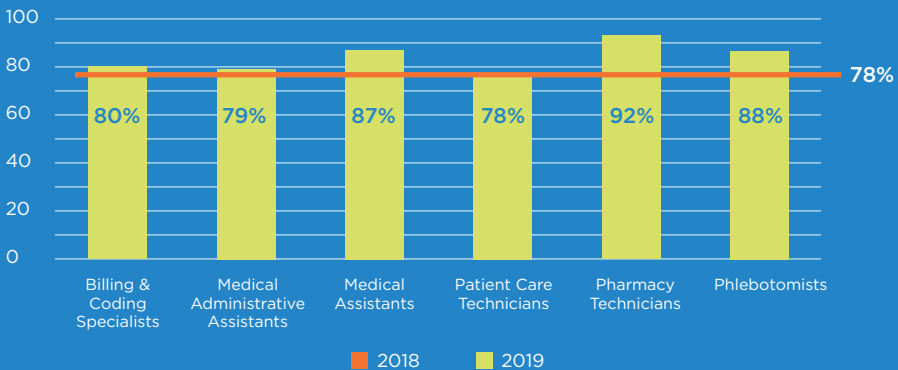
Non-verbal communication/
body language

Conclusion

CERTIFICATION PROVIDES VALUE FOR PROFESSIONALS, EMPLOYERS, AND ULTIMATELY, PATIENTS.

Today's healthcare environment demands efficiency and efficacy from each employee at every level. At NHA, we believe certification leads to better healthcare. Allied health professionals who earn credentials demonstrate their command of foundational occupational knowledge.

Percent of institutes that encourage employees to have or to obtain professional certification



Employers believe that certification can positively impact their institutions, reporting that professional certification provides credibility, improves the standard of care and improves patient safety. It's no surprise that for these reasons, employers continue to encourage employees to have or obtain professional certification.

Despite seeing value in certification, employers still believe that there's room for skill development in newly certified allied health professionals. As we work toward improving healthcare for our communities, we also need to consider how we support and develop those who serve at the front-line and

behind-the-scenes. Educators and employers should consider how to grow hard and soft skills in ways that will benefit the individual professional, the healthcare institution and ultimately, patients.

At NHA, we believe it's our responsibility to advocate for allied health professionals. We commit to doing so by partnering with the healthcare community to create learning resources that can begin to address skill development through innovative ways that better connect the learners' knowledge to real-world application.

Research methodology

A third-party research firm conducted the research within the 2019 Industry Outlook. The survey was structured to assess the opinions of employers concerning the professional outlook for billing and coding specialists, medical administrative assistants, medical assistants, patient care technicians, pharmacy technicians and phlebotomists. This survey was in market March 6-8, 2019, and evaluated the opinions of 166 employers that were not current NHA customers.

About NHA

Since 1989, NHA has been partnering with allied health education programs, organizations, and employers across the nation to award more than 750,000 allied health certifications. The organization offers eight nationally accredited exams, certification preparation and study materials, two specialty certificate programs, industry-leading outcomes-based data analytics, as well as ongoing professional development and continuing education. For more information, visit www.nhanow.com.

NHA is a division of Assessment Technologies Institute, LLC, a leader in providing technology based educational, assessment, testing and certification solutions for healthcare and other vocational fields.

National Healthcareer Association. (2018). 2018 Industry Outlook.

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