

nha 

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**Industry  
Outlook**

# 2020 Industry Outlook

## Understanding the journey to career success

Pathways to professional success are not always straightforward. Circumstances—including access to education, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and geography among other factors—can create twists and turns that shape each path. It can be long and winding, but with training, education, and commitment to themselves and from others, individuals can navigate to success.

National certification is a starting point, like the red star on a map that shows “you are here.” It designates readiness for the career journey ahead because it demonstrates a standardized measure of knowledge and skills. Once you’ve earned it, you’re ready to traverse a journey to career success. Again, the pathway is unique to the individual.

Educators see certification as a milestone for students. Passing a nationally accredited exam means a student is more likely to be work-ready. Employers value the standardization national certification provides and use it to screen job applicants. By using certification as a start, healthcare professionals can carve their paths by honing soft skills, seeking additional clinical training, taking on more responsibilities, and developing advanced skills to continue moving upward.

Because no pathway to professional success looks the same, NHA sought to uncover what factors impact the journey. The 2020 Industry Outlook collected insights and data from employers of allied health professionals, digging deeper to understand what they seek in candidates, what these professionals’ daily work looks like, and what traits and skills make them most successful in their roles.

As an advocate for allied health professionals, we hope you can use this data to help your students and employees navigate their own path to achieve their career dreams.

Which of the following  
best describes the current  
professional certification  
requirements at your institution?

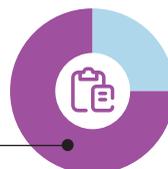
83% encourage or  
require certification  
for billing & coding  
specialists (n=203)



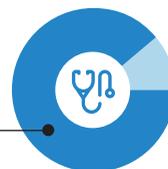
87% encourage or  
require certification  
for EKG technicians  
(n=120)



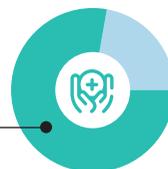
75% encourage or  
require certification  
for medical  
administrative  
assistants (n=171)



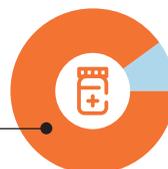
89% encourage or  
require certification  
for medical  
assistants (n=197)



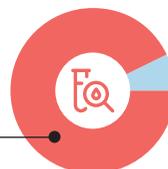
78% encourage or  
require certification  
for patient care  
technicians (n=162)



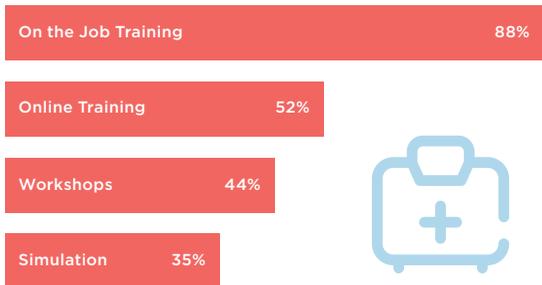
90% encourage or  
require certification  
for pharmacy  
technicians (n=159)



93% encourage or  
require certification  
for phlebotomy  
technicians (n=152)

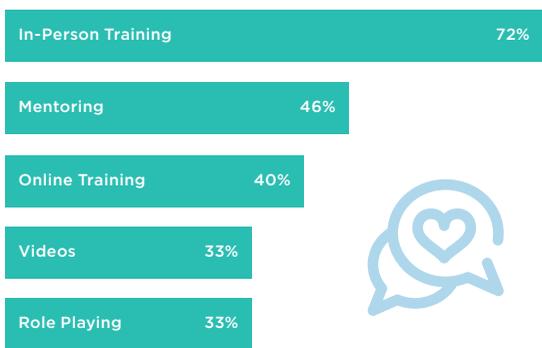


**Training methods used to develop employees' clinical skills (n=277)**



Employers were asked to select all methods that apply. These are the top four responses.

**Training methods used to develop employees' soft skills (n=277)**



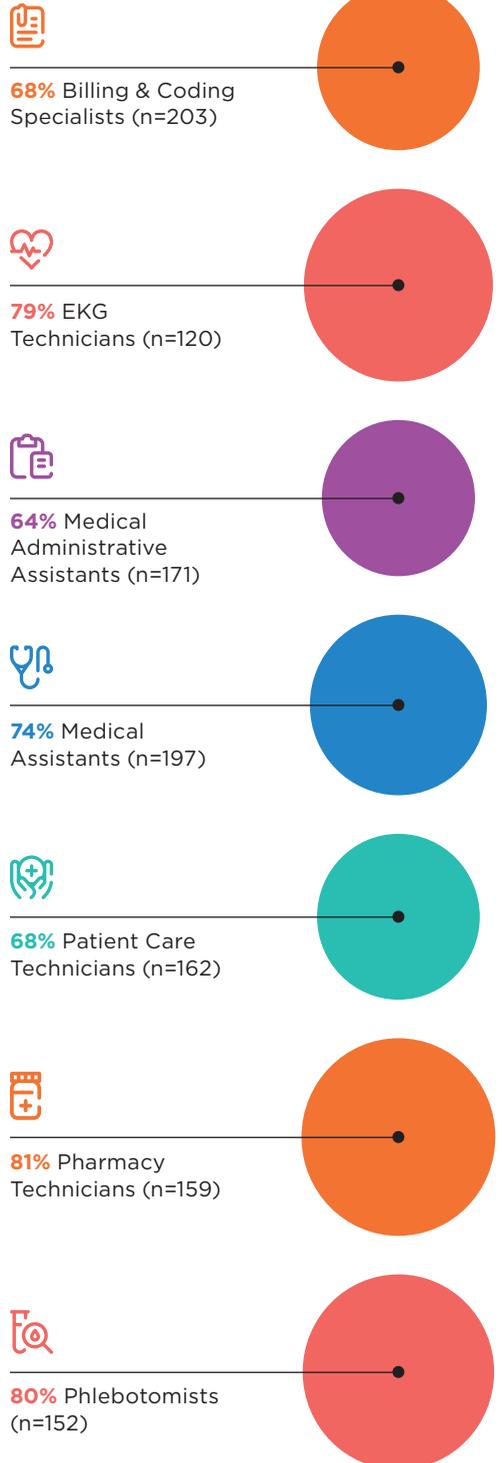
Employers were asked to select all methods that apply. These are the top five responses.

**63%**



**63% of institutions increase pay when an employee earns professional certification. (n=277)**

**Approximately what percent of the following professions are certified within your organization?**

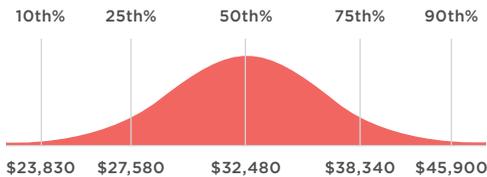




# Medical Assistant

n=197

## Medical assistant salary range



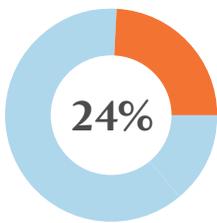
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Most important soft skills

- 1 Professionalism
- 2 Verbal Communication
- 3 Critical Thinking

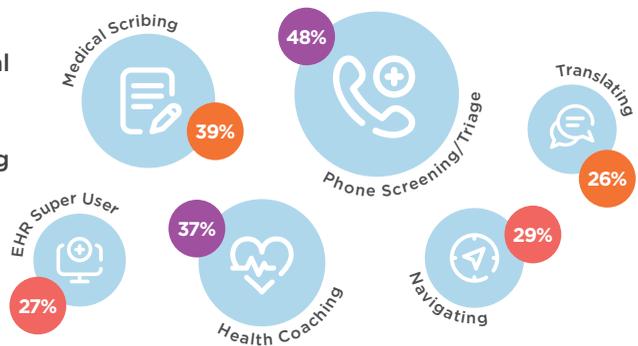
## Most lacking soft skills

- 1 Critical Thinking
- 2 Professionalism
- 3 Self-Awareness

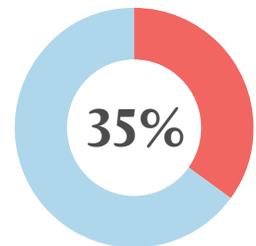
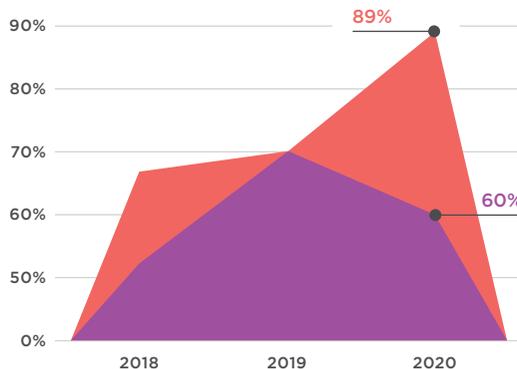


24% of employers said it's difficult to find qualified medical assistants.

Institutions report medical assistants are responsible for performing advanced skills



- Institutions that encourage or require certification
- Employers that report newly certified medical assistants are prepared for their job duties



35% of employers believe that MAs have more responsibility this year compared to last.

## Screening criteria for medical assistant applications





# Patient Care Technician

n=162

## Patient care technician salary range



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Most important soft skills

- 1 Professionalism
- 2 Verbal Communication
- 3 Critical Thinking

## Most lacking soft skills

- 1 Critical Thinking
- 2 Professionalism
- 3 Dependability

## Patient care technicians main job responsibilities include:



76% Provide Basic Patient Care



58% Perform Safety Checks



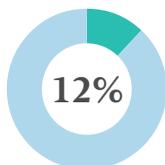
56% Acquire/Administer Patient Care Supplies



55% Ensure Cleanliness of Patient Rooms



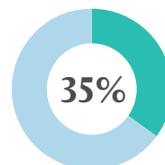
52% Monitor Vital Signs



12% of employers say it's difficult to find qualified patient care technicians.



The average patient to patient care technician ratio is **6.5 : 1**



35% of employers believe that patient care technicians have more responsibility this year compared to last.

## Institutions with formal training programs for patient care technicians



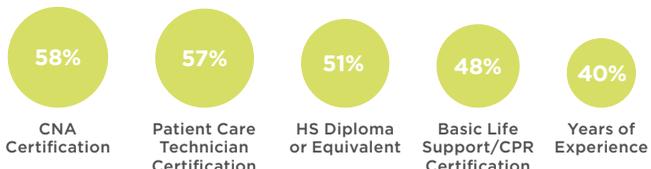
## Types of institutional training programs



78% of institutions encourage/require certification.

62% of employers report newly certified patient care technicians are prepared for their job duties.

## Screening criteria for patient care technician applications

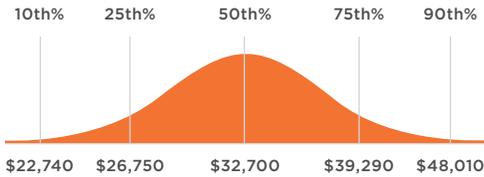




# Pharmacy Technician

n=159

## Pharmacy technician salary range



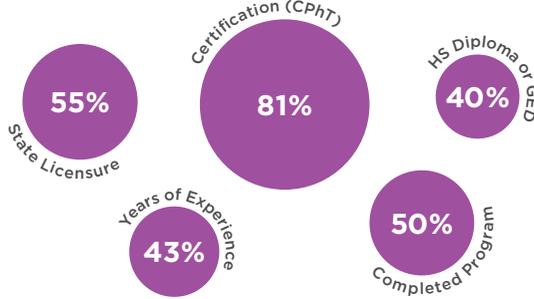
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Most important soft skills

Most lacking soft skills



## Screening criteria for pharmacy technician applications



Pharmacy technicians have a number of responsibilities, often requiring advanced skills.



70% Management of Inventory



69% Prescription Processing



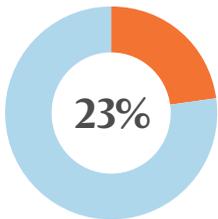
63% Prescription Dispensing



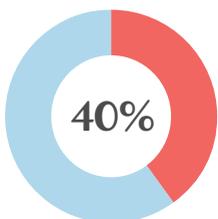
59% Technician Product Verification



56% Calculation & Measurement of Medication



23% of employers said it's difficult to find qualified pharmacy technicians.



40% of employers report that pharmacy technicians have more responsibility this year compared to last.

- Institutions that encourage or require certification
- Employers that report newly certified medical assistants are prepared for their job duties

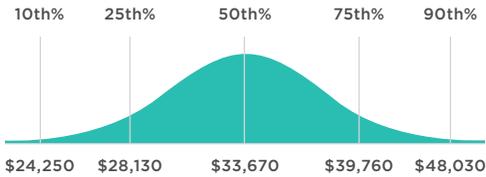




# Phlebotomy Technician

n=152

## Phlebotomy technician salary range



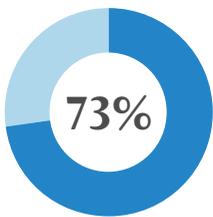
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Most important soft skills

- 1 Professionalism
- 2 Dependability
- 3 Verbal Communication

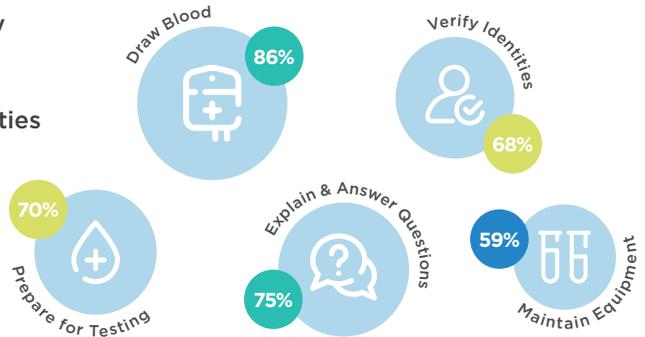
## Most lacking soft skills

- 1 Verbal Communication
- 2 Dependability
- 3 Critical Thinking

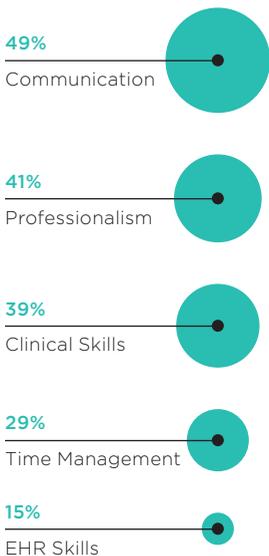


73% of employers report that newly certified phlebotomy technicians are prepared to do their job duties.

## Phlebotomy technicians main job responsibilities



## Skills newly certified phlebotomy techs lack (n=41)



The average phlebotomist technician performs 28 sticks a day.

93% of institutions encourage/require certification.

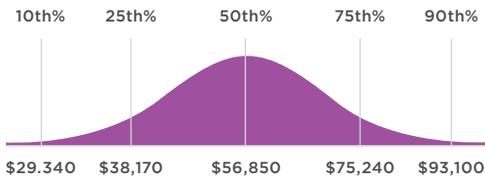
80% of employers report that their phlebotomy techs are certified.

## Screening criteria for phlebotomy applications





## EKG technician salary range



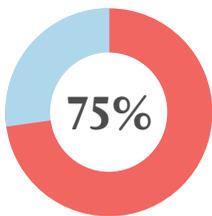
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Most important soft skills

- 1 Professionalism
- 2 Dependability
- 3 Verbal Communication

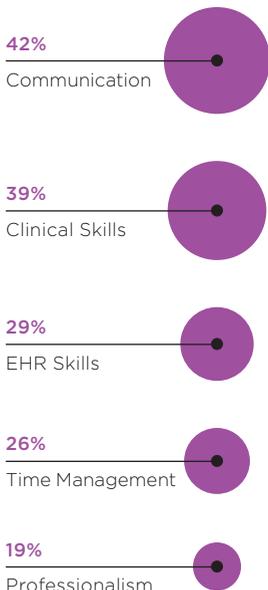
## Most lacking soft skills

- 1 Critical Thinking
- 2 Professionalism
- 3 Verbal Communication



75% of employers report that newly certified EKG technicians are prepared to do their job duties.

## Skills newly certified EKG techs lack (n=31)



## Why is professional certification important for EKG technicians?



The average EKG technician runs 13 tests a day.



## Top 3 tasks EKG technicians are responsible for:



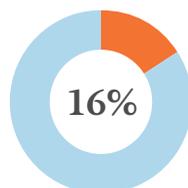
Set Up & Administer EKGs



Prepare Patients for Holter or Ambulatory Monitoring



Set Up & Administer Stress Tests



16% of employers said it's difficult to find qualified EKG technicians.

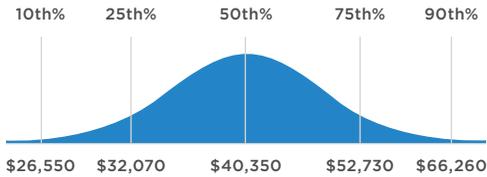
## Screening criteria for EKG technician applications





# Billing & Coding Specialist n=203

## Billing & coding specialist salary range



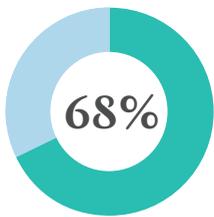
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

## Most important soft skills

- 1 Professionalism
- 2 Dependability
- 3 Critical Thinking

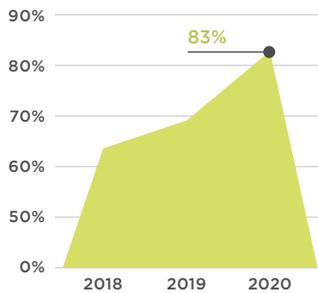
## Most lacking soft skills

- 1 Critical Thinking
- 2 Professionalism
- 3 Dependability



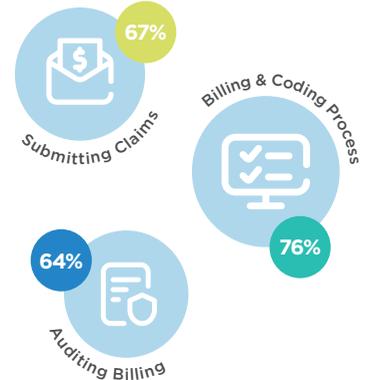
68% of employers report that newly certified billing & coding specialists are prepared to do their jobs.

## Institutions that require or encourage certification

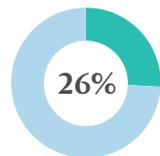
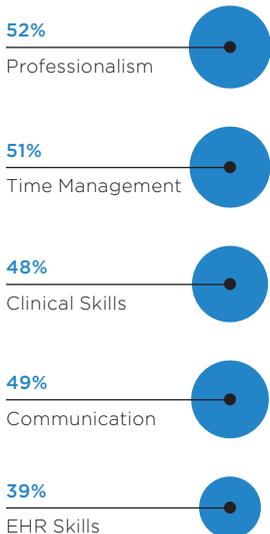


68% of employers report that their billing & coding specialists are certified.

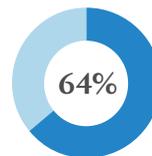
## Top 3 tasks billing & coding specialists are responsible for:



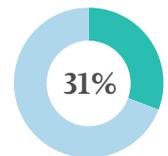
## Skills newly certified billing & coding specialist lack (n=67)



26% of employers said it's difficult to find qualified billing & coding specialists.



64% of billing & coding specialists are able to reduce payment delays & obtain maximum reimbursement from insurers



31% of employers report that billing & coding specialists have more responsibility this year over last.

## Screening criteria for billing & coding specialist applications

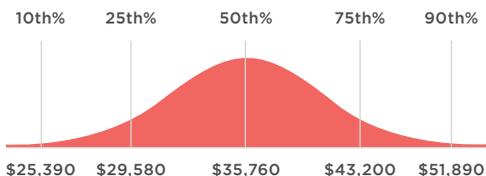




# Medical Administrative Assistant

n=171

Medical administrative assistant technician salary range

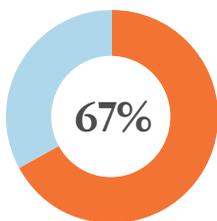


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Most important soft skills

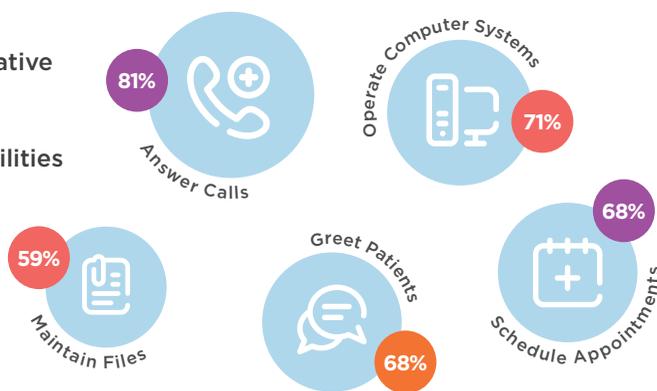


Most lacking soft skills



67% of employers report that newly certified medical administrative assistants are prepared to do their jobs.

## Medical administrative assistant main job responsibilities



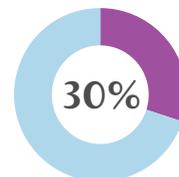
## Skills newly certified medical administrative assistants lack (n=70)



75% of institutions encourage or require certification.



64% of employers report that their medical administrative assistants are certified.



30% of employers believe that medical administrative assistants have more responsibility this year compared to last.

## Screening criteria for medical administrative assistant applications



## Research Methodology

A third-party research firm conducted the research within the 2020 Industry Outlook. The survey was structured to assess the opinions of employers concerning the professional outlook for billing and coding specialists, EKG technicians, medical administrative assistants, medical assistants, patient care technicians, pharmacy technicians and phlebotomists. This survey was in market December 31, 2019 through January 9, 2020, and evaluated the opinions of 277 employers, of which 12 (1.02%) were current NHA customers.

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## References

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019). Occupational Outlook Handbook. Retrieved on February 12, 2020 from <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/>.

National Healthcareer Association (2020). 2020 Industry Outlook.

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## About NHA

Since 1989, NHA has been partnering with allied health education programs, organizations, and employers across the nation to award more than 900,000 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](http://www.nhanow.com).

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