

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Healthy Connections  
MEDICAID



---

# Medication Assistant Certification Policy Manual

Waiver and Facilities Services, 9<sup>th</sup>  
Floor PO Box 8206  
Columbia, SC 29202  
Phone: 803-898-7855  
Fax: 803-255-8204  
Email: [sc\\_mac@scdhhs.gov](mailto:sc_mac@scdhhs.gov)

# MEDICATION ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework within which a Medication Assistant Training Program (MATP) shall be initiated for selected unlicensed healthcare personnel (i.e., non-nursing staff) who provide medications to those receiving services in nursing homes.

## INTRODUCTION

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) has been granted statutory authority by the General Assembly of South Carolina to develop the Medication Assistant Certification Program **for nursing homes only**. Pursuant to [SC Code of Laws Section 40-33-43](#), the department has developed program standards to include, but not be limited to, curriculum, training and competence, and testing certification requirements. The department has created and will maintain a Medication Assistant Certification Registry. The provision of medications by selected unlicensed persons is limited to oral and topical medications, and regularly scheduled insulin, and prescribed anaphylactic treatments under established medical protocol and does not include sliding scale insulin or other injectable medications. Licensed nurses must train and supervise medication assistants and, after reviewing their competency evaluations, may approve them for the provision of medications.

## MEDICATION ASSISTANT CERTIFICATION AND REGISTRY

Candidates seeking certification as a medication assistant must successfully complete an approved SC Medication Assistant Training Program (MATP) requiring a minimum of 100 hours of training. The training must consist of sixty (60) hours of didactic training including work in a skills lab and/or simulation facility, in addition to forty (40) hours of supervised clinical practicum in a nursing home supervised by an approved Registered Nurse (RN).

### Qualifications for Medication Assistant Candidates

Candidates entering a MATP must meet the following requirements:

- Be an adult; or if not an adult, the facility must assure that there is compliance with state, federal and local laws pertaining to the employment of children.
- Have no prior conviction or pled no contest (nolo contendere) for child or adult abuse, neglect or mistreatment.
- Not have any Class A, B, C, or D felony or Class E or F felony involving criminal sexual conduct, physical or sexual abuse of children, elderly or infirm, or crimes where the victim is a patient or resident of a health care facility.
- Have ability to render care and services to residents in an understanding and gentle manner.
- Have sufficient education to be able to perform their duties.
- Have a working knowledge of regulations applicable to their scope of work.

### Medication Aide Certification Examination

After the completion of a State approved training program, candidates for Medication Assistant Certification must successfully complete a skills competency evaluation prior to registering for the Medication Aide Certification Exam (MACE).

The MACE is a national medication aide certification exam administered to individuals who choose to receive additional training to become certified medication assistants. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing develops the MACE and administers the computer-based exam with the contractual assistance of a vendor, who manages the back-end system. Once certified, these medication aides serve an important role in nursing homes by helping distribute medications and monitoring for adverse reactions.

The examination application will be routed to the MATP to confirm the candidate's medication assistant training completion date and completion of the skills competency evaluation delivered by the training program. **Candidates must pass the MACE exam within two (2) years of course completion. Candidates have a maximum of three (3) attempts to pass the exam.** Candidates who successfully pass the comprehensive skills evaluation and MACE are included on the South Carolina Medication Assistant Certification Registry.

Completion of the MACE and subsequent listing on the South Carolina Medication Assistant Certification Registry will qualify an individual for consideration of employment in a skilled nursing facility in South Carolina as a medication assistant.

### Recertification

A South Carolina Medication Assistant Certificate is valid for 24 months from the date of issuance. To be eligible for recertification, candidates need:

- A total of ten (10) Continuing Education Units (CEUs).
  - The continuing education requirement must include five hours of review of the fundamental principles of medication administration, the skills and knowledge necessary for the task of medication administration AND five hours of continuing education on topics of current drug use relevant to the elderly.
  - The facility must maintain records sufficient to verify the continuing education record of present and previous employees.
- Eight (8) hours of paid work in a 24-month period; and
- An annual skills competency evaluation check-off (on a State approved form), dated and signed by a registered nurse.

### Reciprocity

Reciprocity is a process by which a certified medication assistant from another state may qualify for certification in South Carolina because of his or her certification status.

Candidates are eligible for reciprocity if they are a medication aide in a state other than South Carolina and if they are currently listed on another state's medication aide registry as active and in good standing. A medication aide must have passed the MACE to be placed on the South Carolina Medication Assistant Certification Registry.

**NOTE:** North Carolina Med Aide Nursing Home certification will also be accepted.

### Registry

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) and/or its designee

maintains overall operation of and updates to the Medication Assistant Certification registry. This registry is maintained through contractual relationships with a vendor, who manages the back-end system. SCDHHS and/or its designee may deny, refuse to renew or revoke a medication assistant from the registry if the medication assistant does not meet the requirements set out in applicable policies and regulations established by the State.

### **Certification Denial, Refusal of Renewal, or Revocation of Certification**

SCDHHS may deny, refuse renewal or revoke a certification for the following reasons:

- Falsely representing information on an application for initial certification or renewal of a certification
- Failure to demonstrate competency and/or negligence in the performance of duties which fall within the scope of practice of the certified medication assistant as delegated by the registered nurse. Negligence in the performance of duties must mean, but not be limited to:
  - Assuming duties and responsibilities without adequate training or when competency has not been obtained.
  - Selling, giving away, or administering drugs for other than legal and legitimate purposes;
  - Altering or falsifying client or medication administration records.
  - Substantiated findings of resident abuse or neglect, misappropriation of resident property, or abandoning residents.
  - Having received a revocation, suspension, probation, or other discipline of a certificate to practice as a medication assistant, or its equivalent, or as a certified nurse aide
  - Practicing as a medication assistant on a lapsed certificate.
- Conviction of a Class A, B, C, or D felony or Class E or F felony involving criminal sexual conduct, physical or sexual abuse of children, elderly or infirm, or crimes where the victim is a patient or resident of a health care facility.

### **Appeals**

If SCDHHS proposes to deny, refuse renewal or revoke a certification of a certified medication assistant, the aggrieved person may request a hearing pursuant to Section 1-23-310 et. seq., Code of Laws, State of South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and the Department of Health and Human Services regulations Section 126-150, et. seq. SCDHHS must provide a notice to the certified medication assistant identifying the intended action and the individual's right to a fair hearing.

To request a hearing, the aggrieved person must submit a request stating the issue to be appealed and include a copy of the SCDHHS notice to the Division of Appeals and Hearings no later than thirty (30) days from the receipt of the notice. Appeals can be submitted:

- Online at [www.scdhhs.gov/appeals](http://www.scdhhs.gov/appeals)
- By fax at (803) 255-8251
- By mail to: Division of Appeals and Hearings, Post Office Box 8206, Columbia. South Carolina 29202-8206; or
- Verbally by calling 1-888-549-0820

### **Candidate Handbook**

Testing information and training program materials such as the medication assistant training application, classroom supply list, listing of approved training programs, SCDHHS Policy,

training presentations, and FAQs may be found on the website at [MACE Candidate Handbook](#) or <https://credentia.com/test-takers/scmace> . This handbook is designed for candidates seeking Medication Assistant certification in South Carolina, leading to listing on the South Carolina Medication Assistant Registry. It describes the process of applying for and taking the Medication Assistant Certification Examination (MACE®). It is important that candidates read the entire handbook and keep a copy of it until they are notified of their examination results.

# STANDARDS FOR MEDICATION ASSISTANT TRAINING PROGRAMS (MATP)

A MATP is a State approved program offering training to candidates that desire to become eligible for certification as a medication assistant. South Carolina requires a minimum of one hundred (100) hours of training. This consists of sixty (60) hours of didactic training including work in a skills lab and/or simulation facility, in addition to forty (40) hours of supervised clinical practicum in a nursing home supervised by an approved Registered Nurse (RN)

SC MATPs will conduct skills competency checkoff before the candidate can register for the MACE.

## MATP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

The **South Carolina Medication Assistant Program Application** must be completed in its entirety and submitted to SCDHHS, Office of Waiver and Facility Services, for review of state approval to obtain certification of a MATP. No classes may begin before SCDHHS approval.

The MATP must have a program director and one qualified program instructor when applying for initial approval. The training of medication assistant students must be performed by or under the general supervision of an RN who possesses a minimum of two years of nursing experience, at least one year of which must be in the provision of services at a long-term care facility.

Prior to approval, a MATP must have a clinical contract agreement from all nursing facilities that will be used as a clinical training site. The contracts must be signed by facility authority within the past six months or specifies the time period the agreement is valid.

Private based programs must contact the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education at 803-737-3918 and forward a copy of the license from the Commission or a letter from the Commission stating that the license is in process or letter of exemption.

After approval of a MATP, the SCDHHS Office of Waiver and Facility Services must be informed of substantive changes made to the program by submitting documentation on the **South Carolina Medication Assistant Training Program Applicant**. **Substantive changes include:**

- Changes in Program Director and/or Program Coordinator/Primary Instructor
- Additional agreements or changes to existing agreements for clinical training site
- Contact information
- Training site location

## Renewal Requirements

MATP approvals are valid for a period of two years from the date of issue. The MATP must submit the following for renewal consideration:

- A complete renewal application
- Clinical site agreements
- Classroom and clinical schedules
- Background checks for primary and supplemental instructors

SCDHHS will review approved MATPs based on factors including, but not limited to, MATP pass/fail rates, reports of noncompliance, and graduation rates. As a condition of renewal, SCDHHS can conduct unscheduled compliance visits during regular business hours to ensure programs are being conducted in accordance with the approved plan and in compliance with the applicable regulations/policies.

A program that does not meet program requirements will not be approved for renewal and cannot reapply to the SCDHHS for a period of one (1) year.

## Compliance

SCDHHS conducts random compliance reviews during regular office hours. Failure to comply with programmatic requirements may result in the application of sanctions to include but not limited to:

- **Plan of Correction:** The training program will be required to submit a Plan of Correction outlining the deficiency(ies), the detailed plan to correct the deficiency(ies) and the effective date the plan will be implemented. The training program will have ten (10) business days to submit a plan of correction for review and approval. If a plan of correction has not been received or is not approved, the training program will be suspended until a plan of correction has been received and approved.
- **Educational Intervention:** The training program is required to have appropriate staff attend training by the SCDHHS to improve knowledge of medication assistant programmatic requirements. If Educational Intervention training has not been received within 30 days of the sanction, the training program will be suspended from receiving new enrollments until the educational training is received.
- **Suspension:** The training program is removed from the approved MATP list and is unable to receive new enrollees for a designated period of time. The minimum period of suspension is one (1) month. Training programs who are suspended must complete an acceptable Plan of Correction before the suspension is lifted.
- **Termination:** The cancellation of a MATP.

## MATP STAFFING

### Program Director

The program director is individual that has administrative authority for the MATP. The program director may be an administrator of the nursing facility or school, the designated program coordinator, or the owner. This individual must sign all correspondence from SCDHHS.

### Program Coordinator

The program coordinator is the individual responsible for oversight and managing the daily operations and administrative tasks of a MATP under the general supervision of the program director. The program coordinator must meet the following requirements:

- A minimum of two (2) years RN nursing experience including at least one (1) year in the provision in long term care nursing services within the last five (5) years.
- Proof of current compact licensure or licensed in South Carolina as an RN.
- Resume documenting required experience.
- The program coordinator can serve as an instructor
- Work under the general supervision of the program director. The program coordinator

may also serve as the Program Director.

- Conduct the medication assistant competency evaluations.

### Primary Instructor

The primary instructor is responsible for conducting the classroom and clinical training of the MATP under the general supervision of the program director. The program coordinator may serve as the primary instructor. The primary instructor must meet the following requirements:

- A minimum of two (2) years RN nursing experience including at least one (1) year in the provision in long term care nursing services within the last five (5) years.
- Proof of current compact licensure or licensed in South Carolina as an RN.
- Resume documenting required experience.
- The program coordinator can serve as an instructor

### Other instructors:

The following may serve as instructors under the general supervision of the primary instructor:

- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).
- Licensed Pharmacist.
- Licensed Physician, Physician's Assistant, or Advanced Practice Registered Nurse.

## MATP CLASSROOM REQUIREMENTS

The MATP must ensure:

- Lab equipment is maintained in the skills demonstration lab at all times for demonstration, practice, and for safely administering a medication.
- The State approved Skills Competency Evaluation for medication assistant students is utilized to meet the instructor's need based on the curriculum guidelines.
- Competency with respect to all clinical lab skills is verified by the instructor prior to the beginning of the clinical rotation, and a record placed in the student's file.
- Students are oriented to the various forms used to document resident information during classroom and lab instruction prior to clinical experiences. Documentation on the appropriate flow sheets/forms is completed with instructor supervision during the clinical rotation.
- The area designated as the classroom/lab in a facility-based program is an area that is not designated for resident care.
- The size of the classroom/lab is not specified; however, the classroom/lab will be evaluated for adequacy based on the number of students enrolled and how the space is utilized.

## CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

The MATP must provide all students, upon successful completion, with a certificate of completion and/or transcript, or a letter on the program's letterhead certifying the student's successful

completion of the program. The total number of program hours must be on the certificate of completion.

## MATP ADMISSION APPLICATION

A program must utilize an admission application that informs the students of the policies of the program and must provide notification to students sponsored by Medicaid- certified nursing facilities that they are not responsible for any costs associated with training, including deposits for textbooks and/or supplies used.

## MATP CLINICAL SUPERVISION

- The primary instructor is responsible for the supervision of all instructors. The primary instructor must be available on call by telecommunications for LPN instructors supervising students in the clinical area.
- The instructor to student ratio must be no greater than 1:8 in the clinical area.
- Instructors must not be involved in more than one role while supervising students in the clinical area.
- Clinical assignments are to be made by the primary instructor with the approval of the facility staff.
- The assigned resident's care plan, medical chart information, and medication administration record should be reviewed at the beginning of each clinical experience. It is suggested that a worksheet be developed for students that contains pertinent information to provide resident care and should include new orders or changes in the resident's status.
- Student assignments should be posted on the appropriate unit before students provide care to residents and should include the name of the school, the names of the students, and the room numbers of the residents.
- During at least one clinical experience it is recommended that students administer medications for a minimum of two and not more than four residents during a specified clinical day. Students should be given individual assignments. More than one student should not be assigned to the same resident at the same time.
- Clinical assignments should provide the following:
  - Administration of medication for residents with varied levels of care needs.
  - The opportunity to be evaluated on organizational skills and time management.

## PHYSICAL FACILITIES

The classroom and skills training facilities will provide adequate temperature controls, clean and safe conditions, adequate space to accommodate students, adequate lighting, and all equipment needed, including audiovisual equipment and any equipment needed for simulating resident care.

## MATP DOCUMENTATION

The MATP must maintain the following documentation.

Approval letter from SCDHHS	Copy of Medication Assistant Training Program Application	Copies of all correspondence from SCDHHS	Training Facility Code issued by testing vendor
Location of Testing Records	RN Training Supervisor name, Phone and Fax numbers, and Email address	Location of Training Program Records	Location of Administrative Office, Classroom and Laboratory
Number of Program Hours	Location of each Classroom	Location of each Skills Laboratory	Each Program Instructor's Information (resume, SLED check, and nursing license)

The MATP must maintain a record for each student records for five (5) years or according to school/facility policy if this period is longer than five (5) years. The records must include:

- Enrollment Application (May not apply to all programs)
- A record of attendance for each trainee,
- The nursing facility sponsor
- Affirmation of required hours
- Skills Competency Checklist