

## MEMORANDUM

**From:** Donald A. Balasa, JD, MBA, Chief Executive Officer, and Legal Counsel  
American Association of Medical Assistants

**Topic:** Use of “certified medical assistant®” and “CMA”

The title of “Certified Medical Assistant®” (upper or lower case) and/or the initialism “CMA®” are not universal to be used by any medical assistant. These are titles and credentials that are proprietary to the American Association of Medical Assistants (AAMA).

The **AAMA owns Registration No. 2,509,034** issued by the United States Patent and Trademark Office for the mark “Certified Medical Assistant®.” The registration is on the Principal Register, and is registered for use by persons authorized by the AAMA® to indicate that the medical assistant services performed or to be performed have been or will be performed by a person whose services are competent in the medical assistant field, such individual’s services having met certain educational standards in the medical assistant field set by the AAMA® and having passed examinations administered by the AAMA®. To meet these requirements, applicants must have graduated from a postsecondary medical assisting academic program accredited by either the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) or the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES), and must have passed the CMA (AAMA)® Certification Examination.

The AAMA first bestowed its “Certified Medical Assistant®” credential and authorized use of the initials “CMA” as an abbreviation therefore in 1963 and has used those marks continually since that time throughout the United States.

Any medical assistant who represents herself/himself as a “Certified Medical Assistant®” (upper or lower cased) or a “CMA (AAMA)®,” and any organization which represents its medical assistants as “Certified Medical Assistants®” or “CMAs” when such individuals have not been certified by the Certifying Board of the AAMA®, are doing so misleadingly and may be in jeopardy of legal sanction.

The American Association of Medical Assistants therefore urges all medical assistants and all employers of medical assistants who misuse the “Certified Medical Assistant®” or “CMA (AAMA)®” to immediately cease from these false and illegal practices that are infringing on the rights of the AAMA® in these marks.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. You may contact Donald A. Balasa, JD, MBA at [dbalasa@aama-ntl.org](mailto:dbalasa@aama-ntl.org) or call 800-228-2262. Please visit our website for more information on medical assisting, [www.aama-ntl.org](http://www.aama-ntl.org).