



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Clinic implements advanced training for medical assistants

ADA – In a move to better serve patients and providers, The Clinic has implemented a rigorous, in-house training process for its medical assistants.

A medical assistant (MA) serves as a bridge between the administrative and clinical sides of health care. Since a medical license is not required as an MA, they traditionally focus on rooming patients and checking vital signs. At The Clinic, however, the role of the MA is being expanded through an internal, six-week training course.

“This is not a requirement, we choose to do it,” said Wendy Potter, The Clinic’s Vice President of Nursing. “We want our MA’s to have a strong and validated foundational knowledge base, so our care is standardized and exceeds expectations. We can achieve this with our training program. This increases the quality of care for our patients, which is always our primary goal.”

The Clinic’s MA training program includes six four-hour training sessions designed to teach them more about the clinical side of the role. A primary thrust of the training is to educate MA’s on the causes and effects of illnesses, providing them with a deeper understanding of how to best help maintain the patient’s health.

“Each of our MA’s is assigned to one of our primary care providers, whether an MD, a DO, or a PA,” Potter said. “By completing the training and working alongside a physician, our MA’s will gain valuable knowledge and experience and are in a much better position to understand what a patient might be going through. It really teaches them the ‘why’ in our treatment of patients. It will elevate the quality of care for the patient as well as reduce errors.”

The Clinic’s MA training curriculum was developed by Megan Dent, Assistant Director of Nursing, and Krista Weeks, Clinical Education Coordinator. They spent five months preparing the training materials ahead of the first MA class, which graduates June 12.

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The Clinic has approximately 30 MA's on staff and eventually all of them will complete the six-week course.

"Nurses and MA's stand at a pivot point in patient care," Potter said. "Nurses are always in demand and often we have to compete with other healthcare entities for their services. And while we will always maintain a full staff of nurses, an MA can be incredibly helpful to them and to our providers. And while we understand and acknowledge the difference between a nurse and an MA, and the responsibilities of each, ideally our patients won't see a distinction between the care provided."

The first three graduates of The Clinic's MA training program will put their certificates and newly founded knowledge to use beginning June 15.

"The MA training, as well as all The Clinic's internal, continuous training, is robust," Potter said. "It's comprehensive and challenging. This leads to retention, which is also important. As I mentioned, there is no requirement for us to do this. But at The Clinic, we don't want to just be good enough. We want to be the best. We want our patients to experience unparalleled quality of care, and that is what we strive for every day. This MA training program is simply another step in that direction."

The Clinic @ Central Oklahoma Family Medical Center, or "The Clinic," is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) meeting a stringent set of requirements, including care services on a sliding-fee scale based on federal poverty guidelines. Governed by a board of directors, including patient directors, The Clinic remains thoroughly invested in the needs of patients and its service areas. The Clinic currently operates in four Oklahoma communities – Konawa, Ada, Seminole, and Stratford. To learn more about The Clinic, The Women's Clinic and The Kids Clinic, please visit www.cofmc.com.