

# Medical Administrative Assistants / Medical Receptionists

An employment guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## Medical Administrative Assistants (NOC 1243) / Medical Receptionists (NOC 1414)

***Medical Administrative Assistants may also be called:***

- *medical secretary*
- *ward secretary*
- *medical office assistant – MOA*

### 1. What Would I Do?

*Medical administrative assistants perform a variety of secretarial and administrative duties in doctors' offices, hospitals, medical clinics and other medical settings. Your duties can include:*

- schedule and confirm medical appointments and receive and communicate messages for medical staff and patients
- enter and format electronically based medical reports and correspondence and prepare spreadsheets and documents for review
- interview patients in order to complete forms, documents and case histories
- complete insurance and other claim forms
- start and maintain confidential medical files and records
- prepare financial statements and billing procedures
- establish and maintain various internal office administrative support procedures such as document tracking and filing and monthly reporting

**Medical Receptionists:** *greet people arriving at offices, hospitals and other establishments; they direct visitors to appropriate person or service, answer and forward telephone calls, take messages, and schedule appointments. Your duties can include:*

- greet patients
- schedule appointments, using manual or computerized systems
- receive and record payment for services
- direct patients to appropriate areas

More information:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Medical administrative assistants**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1243>
- **WorkBC Career Profile for Medical Receptionists**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1414>

## 2. Am I Suited For This Job?

***Medical administrative assistants should have:***

- *excellent interpersonal skills*
- *strong communication skills*
- *tact and discretion and strong sense of ethics*
- *good judgment*
- *ability to work well under pressure*

*They should be:*

- *Detail-oriented*
- *Organized*

***Medical receptionists should have:***

- *strong communication skills*
- *good listening skills*

*They should be:*

- *polite, friendly, and courteous*
- *able to remain calm under pressure*
- *organized*

**Medical administrative assistants** work in the offices of health care professionals (e.g., physicians, medical practitioners, rehabilitation clinics, etc.). Hours are usually set by the employer's clinic hours, which may include evenings or weekends. Those who work as ward secretaries in hospitals may sometimes be required to work on a shift system. Medical administrative assistants are also at risk of contracting illnesses because they are in relatively close contact with patients, so precautions are taken to minimize the risk.

**Medical receptionists** work behind desks in lobbies or reception areas and some must stand for most of the workday. They may work evenings and weekends. Their work can be stressful and tiring.

Sources:

- **WorkBC Career Profile for Medical administrative assistants**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1243>
- **WorkBC Career Profile for Medical Receptionists**  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1414>
- **Career Cruising database** (Profiles for 'Medical Secretary' and 'Receptionist'). Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>

### 3. What Are The Wages And Benefits?

In British Columbia, the average annual salary for **Medical administrative assistants** ranges from \$33,000 - \$44,000. In BC, you can expect to make:

**Medical Administrative Assistants, NOC 1243  
 Hourly Wages**

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
<b>British Columbia</b>	16.00	20.00	25.00
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Lower Mainland - Southwest Region</a>	16.00	20.00	25.00
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Thompson--Okanagan Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	N/A	N/A	N/A

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Table from Job Bank Wage Report <http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/home-eng.do?lang=eng>

Many employers pay for vacation, sick leave, and medical insurance. Some also pay dental insurance and partial retirement benefits.

In British Columbia, the average annual salary for **Medical receptionists** ranges from \$33,000 - \$44,000. In BC's regions, you can expect to make:

**Medical Receptionists NOC 1414**  
**Hourly Wages**

Location	Wage (\$/hr)		
	Low	Median	High
<b>British Columbia</b>	10.75	16.00	23.50
<a href="#">Cariboo Region</a>	10.75	16.00	23.50
<a href="#">Kootenay Region</a>	10.75	16.00	23.50
<a href="#">Lower Mainland - Southwest Region</a>	11.00	16.00	24.00
<a href="#">Nechako Region</a>	12.00	14.94	20.00
<a href="#">North Coast Region</a>	12.03	16.00	20.70
<a href="#">Northeast Region</a>	14.00	17.15	21.61
<a href="#">Thompson--Okanagan Region</a>	10.25	16.50	22.52
<a href="#">Vancouver Island and Coast Region</a>	12.00	16.10	24.00

Many employers offer paid sick leave, vacation, and medical and dental benefits to full-time receptionists. Some also provide retirement plans, life insurance, and vision care plans.

Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profile for Medical administrative assistants  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1243>
- WorkBC Career Profile for Medical Receptionists  
<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/1414>
- *Career Cruising* database (Profiles for 'Medical Secretary' and 'Receptionist'). Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/career-cruising/>

## 4. What Is The Job Outlook In BC?

### ***Medical administrative assistants:***

The majority of new job openings will result from retirements. Individuals who have completed related post-secondary studies, have good knowledge of computers and software applications, and have previous experience working in the occupation will be in high demand. The increasing use of electronic medical records (EMR), which is replacing paper-based record systems in many offices, requires that medical secretaries stay current with technological developments.

Most employers now require the completion of a Medical Office Assistant, or related certificate or diploma program. Inexperienced workers who have not completed post-secondary studies related to this occupation will likely have more difficulty finding work.

### **Employment Outlook**

#### **Medical Administrative Assistants (NOC 1243)**



Chart from WorkBC

### **Medical Receptionists**

For the 2014-2016 period, the employment outlook is expected to be fair for Receptionists (NOC 1414) in British Columbia. The greatest employment potential is in the Cariboo, Kootenay, Lower Mainland, Thompson Okanagan and Vancouver Island regions.

### **Employment Outlook**

#### **Receptionists, including Medical Receptionists (NOC 1414)**



Chart from WorkBC

#### Sources:

- WorkBC Career Profiles
- Job Bank Canada, profile for Receptionists  
[http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/occupation\\_search-eng.do](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/occupation_search-eng.do)

## 5. How do I become a medical administrative assistant / medical receptionist?

**Medical administrative assistants** do not require certification in BC. However, completion of secondary school is a minimum requirement as well as a related certificate or diploma program including:

- one-year Medical Office Assistant (MOA)
- certificate training in medical terminology or pharmacology, management software and basic medical office procedures
- specialized training in EMR (electronic medical records) systems

**Medical receptionists** do not require certification in BC. Although some employers will accept applicants with less than Grade 12 education, most prefer candidates who have completed a high school diploma and who have related training and/or experience dealing with the public.



## 6. How Do I Find A Job?

### *Where would I work?*

#### ***Medical Administrative Assistants and Medical Receptionists may work in:***

- *doctors' offices, hospitals, medical clinics, health insurance companies and other medical settings*

### ***Finding Advertised Jobs***

Jobs are advertised in a variety of sources including newspapers, magazines and online job sites.

#### ***Local Newspapers***

You can look at the *Vancouver Sun & The Province* at Vancouver Public Library for free. Check the job postings daily, the careers section in the *Vancouver Sun* on Wednesdays and Saturdays and, in *The Province* on Sundays.

#### ***Online Job Postings***

- **B.C. Health Authorities** [five geographic, independent regions]  
<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/>
  - <http://careers.vch.ca/> [Vancouver Coastal Health]
  - <http://careers.fraserhealth.ca/Home.aspx> [Fraser Health]
  - <http://www.viha.ca/careers> [Vancouver Island Health]
  - <http://www.interiorhealth.ca/sites/careers/Pages/default.aspx> [Interior Health]
  - <https://careers.northernhealth.ca/> [Northern Health]
- **B.C. Provincial Health Services Authority** Job Postings [specialty institutions such as BC Transplant, Womens Hospital, BC Childrens Hospital]  
<http://careers.phsa.ca/>
- **Providence Health Care** [faith based Catholic health care agency operating over ten health care facilities including St. Paul's Hospital, Mount St. Joseph]

and Holy Family Hospitals]

[www.providencehealthcare.org/careers](http://www.providencehealthcare.org/careers)

- **Admin Jobs.ca**  
<http://www.adminjobs.ca/en/> [search for 'medical office assistant' or 'medical secretary' or 'medical receptionist']
- **Indeed.com**  
[http://ca.indeed.com/advanced\\_search](http://ca.indeed.com/advanced_search)  
<http://ca.indeed.com/Medical-Office-Assistant-jobs-in-British-Columbia>  
<http://ca.indeed.com/Medical-Receptionist-jobs-in-British-Columbia>
- **BC Jobs.ca**  
<https://www.bcjobs.ca/>

### ***Finding "Hidden Jobs"***

Many job vacancies are not advertised. The resources below will help you *with finding jobs in this "hidden" job market.*

### ***Using Directories to Create a List of Potential Employers***

You can use company directories to produce lists of medical organizations, clinics and doctors' offices. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Canadian Medical Directory**  
Available at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resources, 610.92 C21
- **Directory of Canadian Healthcare Personnel**  
Available at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resources, 362.11025 C21a  
See section covering hospitals and long term care facilities in BC.
- **Guide to Canadian Health Care Facilities**  
Available at the Central Library, Level 4, Reference Resources, 362.105 C212ca  
See section covering hospitals, long term care and health care facilities in BC.
- **Reference Canada**  
<http://www.vpl.ca/digital-library/reference-canada>  
Click on "Start Search" beside Canadian Businesses, then select the "Advanced Search" button. Select both "Keyword/SIC/NAICS" under Business Type and "City" under Geography. In the top search box enter "physicians"

and click SEARCH. Select the appropriate headings. Lower down, select the Province, choose the cities, and click the "View Results" button.

Available from the VPL Digital Library | Explore our Digital Library page

**NOTE:** *You can access this database from a Library computer. If you are using a computer from outside the Library, you will need a Vancouver Public Library card to login to this database. After clicking on the database name, you will be asked to enter your library card number and PIN (usually last four digits of your telephone number).*

## ***Networking, Volunteering and Temporary Agencies***

Many positions are filled by people who have been recommended by someone they know. Networking, working as a volunteer or registering with a temporary employment agency are good ways of helping you find jobs and meet people in your industry.

### ***Networking and the Hidden Job Market:***

*When looking for work, be sure to talk to friends, relatives and neighbours. They may know someone who is hiring! Working as a volunteer, attending events, and joining clubs and associations are good ways to gain "Canadian experience." They are also good ways to meet people to learn about the local job market.*

### ***Volunteer opportunities***

- **Volunteer BC**  
<http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/>
- **GoVolunteer.ca**  
<http://govolunteer.ca/> [search 'health' or 'medical']
- **Volunteer BC**  
<http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

### ***Volunteering in Health Care Facilities***

The following organizations accept volunteers in hospitals, residential care facilities, adult day centres, and other community settings.

- **Health Authorities:**

- **Vancouver Coastal Health**  
<http://www.vch.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>
- **Fraser Health Authority**  
<http://www.fraserhealth.ca/about-us/get-involved/volunteer/>  
(services and information for pregnant women)
- **Providence Health Care**  
<http://www.providencehealthcare.org/volunteers>
- **Community Care Facilities, BC Ministry of Health**  
<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/ccf/survey/index.php/displaycommunity/index>  
Other volunteer opportunities may be available from individual care facilities across BC
- **Canadian Blood Services**  
<https://www.blood.ca/en/volunteers> [volunteer work includes blood donation clinics]

*For additional tips see:*

- **Networking for Employment**  
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>  
[Search Networking for Employment]
- **Getting Canadian Work Experience**  
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>  
[Search Getting Canadian Work Experience]

## 7. Applying for a Job

In Canada, employers usually expect to receive a resume and a cover letter that identifies the position you are applying for and summarizes your experience. Use the library catalogue, <http://vpl.bibliocommons.com/> to find books on writing resumes and cover letters specific to your industry.

*For more information see:*

- **Writing Resumes and Cover Letters**

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search Writing Resumes and Cover Letters]

## 8. Where Can This Job Lead?

**Medical administrative assistants:** often start their career as receptionists for general practice clinics or records clerks for hospitals. With experience, they may find work in a specialist practice or move into supervisory positions, such as office or clinic manager. Medical administrative assistants have the ability to work in various medical settings, including hospitals, clinics, health insurance companies and doctor's and dentist's offices.

**Medical receptionists:** progression to supervisory positions is possible with experience.

## 9. Where Can I Find More Information?

- **Medical Office Assistants' Association of British Columbia – MOAA BC**  
<http://www.medicalofficeassistantsofbc.com/>
- **Learn More About Working in BC and Canada**  
Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>  
[Search Learn More About Working in BC and Canada]

***Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.***

*Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.*