

U.S. Navy Veteran Finds Fulfilling Medical Assistant Career after Graduation

Nov. 11, 2015 – When **Aspen Snider** decided to stop working as an interpreter for the U.S. Navy, she knew she needed to find a career that would provide for her children and allow her to spend time with them.

She'd spent six years interpreting the Mandarin language while stationed in Hawaii, working in an intelligence unit. The experience was rewarding and interesting, but eventually, in 2014, she decided she was ready to head home to Colorado Springs.



Aspen Snider just graduated from Pima Medical Institute's medical assistant program on Nov. 6.

The healthcare field seemed like a good choice after she returned, she said. But time was of the essence, so she needed to obtain new skills right away.

"I was used to getting a paycheck from the military, and I needed to start earning another one quickly," she said. "I thought about veterinary school because I've always liked the medical field, but I have two small kids and wanted to take baby steps."

As it turned out, Pima Medical Institute's [medical assistant](#) program at the Colorado Springs campus ended up being the perfect choice for Snider. The afternoon class schedule allowed her to take her kids to daycare and go the gym. Classes ended in time for her to have dinner with them.

"I loved it. It was definitely the right choice for me."

Lead Medical Assistant Instructor, **Shirley Jelmo**, CMA, RMA, BS, was impressed with Snider's dedication to school. "She followed through with what she committed to do. She was engaged and a good role model," Jelmo said.

Snider graduated on Nov. 6 and is working full time at a local gastroenterologist's office. The career is proving to be exactly what she needed.

"I like the people and the environment," she said. "It's close, like a family."



Snider uses a colonoscope, which provides 320-degree viewing of the colon during an exam. She learned to use the technology at Front Range Endoscopy Centers, where she works as a medical assistant.

Veterans who come to Pima Medical Institute often have a similar story—they leave the military and need to start a new career quickly. Others leave and try to find jobs, only to face hurdles. Enrolling in Pima Medical opens doors. Currently Pima Medical has more than 450 veteran students.

“We welcome veterans at Pima Medical Institute,” said Pima Medical Institute President and Chief Executive Officer, **Fred Freedman**. “After serving our country, we can only hope that our veterans step into a fulfilling career that will provide for them and their families. We work closely with many veterans to make sure that transition from service to school is a smooth one. Once they’ve graduated, we also work with them to find employment.”

The medical assistant is responsible for a number of duties, such as taking patients’ vital

signs, medical billing and coding, operating medical equipment, phlebotomy, injections, sterilization, wound care and much more, explained Jelmo,

“The career has a lot of scope and once they graduate from our program, they’re eligible to sit for the national exam.”

Pima Medical’s nine-month medical assistant certification program is offered at 15 campuses, including East Valley, Mesa, Tucson and Phoenix, Arizona, Chula Vista, California, Colorado Springs, Denver and Aurora, Colorado, Las Vegas, both campuses in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Houston and El Paso, Texas, and in Renton and Seattle, Washington.

To learn more about the medical assistant program, visit <http://pmi.edu/Programs/Certificate/Medical-Assistant>.