

END OF LIFE CROSSROAD

[Back To Navigating The Caregiver CrossRoads \(main page\)](#)
[Back To End of Life Crossroad](#)

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#)

How To Navigate This Document: Put your cursor over a specific letter of the glossary and left click with the mouse. Once you are in the document and want to return to the beginning of the document hit [Back To Top](#) using the same method stated above.

A

Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) - Refers to a set of clinical interventions for the urgent treatment of cardiac arrest, stroke, and other life threatening medical emergencies.

Advanced Care Directive - Written ahead of time, an advanced care directive is a written document that says how you want medical decisions to be made if you lose the ability to make decisions for yourself. An advanced care directive may include a Living Will and a Durable Power of Attorney for health care.

Ancillary Administration - This is a probate proceeding that occurs when an individual who has died owned property in a state other than their legal domicile.

B

Bereavement - The state of being sad or lonely due to the loss of a significant other, friend, pet, or relative by death.

Burial Permit - Legal permission from local authorities for the burial to occur. It may also authorize cremation or removal of the remains to a distant place.

C

Caregiver - A caregiver of an older adult is anyone who provides physical, financial, and/or emotional support for an older adult whose daily activities are limited by diminished mental or physical function.

Caregiver Burden - The emotional, physical, and financial toll that caregiving can have on a caregiver which can increase his/her stress level.

CareTeam - Anyone who is providing any sort of support to the older adult and most importantly the older adult him/herself. This team includes the older adult, the caregiver(s) (primary, secondary, long distance, etc.), medical professionals, allied health professionals, lawyers, homemakers, home health aides, and anyone else who contributes to supporting the health and independence of the older adult.

CareTeam Binder - A binder in which all important information regarding the CareTeam and the caregiving process can be kept. Three essential parts of this CareTeam binder are the contact information of anyone associated with the CareTeam, a hospital log in which an in depth record is kept of the older adult's medical appointments, and a daily journal so that everyone who cares for the older adult can write down exactly what was done and how it went.

Codicil - A document that amends a will.

Contract - A legally binding agreement between two or more parties for specific purposes. Contracted activities must be accomplished within a definite time period and must comply with stated criteria.

CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) - Combination of rescue breathing (mouth-to-mouth resuscitation) and chest compressions used if someone isn't breathing or circulating blood adequately. CPR can restore circulation of oxygen-rich blood to the brain.

Cremains - The ashes that are left following the cremation of a body.

Cremation - The process of reducing a dead body to basic chemical compounds in the form of gases and bone fragments. This is accomplished through high temperatures and vaporization.

Cremation Society - A member-based organization that provides its members with resources to ensure their future cremation and helps them plan their memorial service.

Crypt - A stone chamber that acts as the tomb and houses the coffin.

D

Death Certificate - An official statement, signed by a physician, of the cause, date, and place of a person's death.

Depression - A mental disorder that is characterized as; having a depressed mood, feeling of guilt, loss of interest, feelings of low self worth, interruptions in sleep and appetite, low energy and poor concentration. Depression can affect an individual's ability to take care of their daily responsibilities. Depression is a very common mental disorder.

Disposition (Of A Body) - The practice and process of dealing with the remains of a deceased human being.

DNR/DNI Order (Do Not Resuscitate/Intubate) - Written order from a doctor that resuscitation should not be attempted if a person suffers cardiac or respiratory arrest. A DNR order may be instituted on the basis of an Advance Directive from a person, or from someone entitled to make decisions on their behalf, such as a health care proxy. In some jurisdictions, such orders can also be instituted on the basis of a physician's own initiative, usually when resuscitation would not alter the ultimate outcome of a disease. Any person who does not wish to undergo lifesaving treatment in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest can get a DNR order, although DNR is more commonly done when a person with a fatal illness wishes to die without painful or invasive medical procedures.

[Back To Top](#)

Durable Power Of Attorney - A legal document that enables you to designate another person, called the attorney-in-fact, to act on your behalf, in the event you become disabled or incapacitated.

E

Emergency Care - Care given for a medical emergency when an individual's health is in serious danger and when every second counts.

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) - Or Ambulance Technician, are terms used to denote a healthcare provider of emergency medical services.

Estate - At the time of an individual's death; all of their debts and assets

Estate Planning - Formulation of a plan for the purpose of preparing for meeting future personal, financial, medical, residential, and/or social needs of an individual or his/her beneficiaries

Executor - Also called a Personal Representative, this is a person appointed in a will to handle the probate of a deceased person's estate (assets). The Executor must make an inventory of the descendant's property, collect debts, satisfy creditors, distribute the decedent's property to beneficiaries of the will, pay any taxes due and prepare a final accounting to the probate court.

F

Formal Caregiver - An individual paid to provide care.

Funeral Director - Also known as a mortician or undertaker, this is a professional involved in the business of funeral rites. These tasks often entail the embalming and burial or cremation of the dead, as well as the planning and arrangement of the actual funeral ceremony.

Funeral Home - A funeral home, funeral parlor or mortuary, is a business that provides burial and funeral services for the deceased and their families. These services may include a prepared wake and funeral, and the provision of a chapel for the funeral.

Funeral Service - A ceremony for celebrating, respecting, sanctifying, or remembering the life of a person who has died. Funerary customs comprise the complex of beliefs and practices used by a culture to remember the dead, from interment itself, to various monuments, prayers, and rituals undertaken in their honor. Customs vary widely between cultures, and between religious affiliations within cultures.

G

Green Burial - A burial practice that emphasizes simplicity and environmental sustainability. The body is not embalmed or cremated, but is simply placed in a biodegradable coffin and is buried without a burial vault.

[Back To Top](#)

Guardianship - The legal process determined by State law by which a probate court appoints one or more individuals to handle the personal and financial affairs of a minor or person determined to be mentally incompetent. The Executive Office of Elder Affairs contracts with five (5) agencies to provide Guardianship services to elders who have been abused and a court has determined to be at risk or harm, and to lack decision-making capacity. The primary objective is to act as an adjunct to protective services when no other less restrictive means are available to protect elders who are lacking the capacity to consent to services.

H

Health Care Agent - A person named by the older adult through a Health Care Proxy form that is granted the authority to make all medical and health care decisions for the older adult if he/she becomes incapable of doing it on their own.

Health Care Proxy - A document by which a competent person designates another person to act as his/her health care agent with the authority to make all health care decisions (unless specifically limited) for the grantor should he/she become unable to make or communicate those decisions. Legally recognized in Massachusetts.

Health Insurance Portability And Accountability Act (HIPAA) - The privacy provisions of the federal law, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), apply to health information created or maintained by health care providers who engage in certain electronic transactions, health plans, and health care clearinghouses. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued the regulation, "Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information," applicable to entities covered by HIPAA. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is the Departmental component responsible for implementing and enforcing the privacy regulation.

Heir - Someone who inherits assets from an estate.

Hospice - Hospice is a special way of caring for people who are terminally ill, and for their family. This care includes physical care and counseling. Hospice care is covered under Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance).

I

Informal Caregiver - A family member, friend, or any other person who provides care without pay.

Inheritance Tax - When an individual inherits property this is the tax levied by local or state government.

Intestate - When an individual dies without a legal will.

L

Last Will And Testament - The legal declaration of a person's wishes concerning the disposal of his/her property after death.

Life Insurance - Insurance that covers human life and provides benefits in the events of death or dismemberment by accident, benefits for disability and an endowment benefit.

[Back To Top](#)

Living Will - A legal document also known as a medical directive or advance directive. It states your wishes regarding life-support or other medical treatment in certain circumstances, usually when death is imminent. Not recognized as a legal document in Massachusetts.

M

Mausoleum - A large building that houses one or more tombs.

Medical Orders For Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) - Written instructions from a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant that contain orders for end of life medical treatment based on the patient's specific wishes.

Medical Power of Attorney - Legal document that allows you to name someone to make health care decisions for you if, for any reason and at any time, you become unable to make or communicate those decisions for yourself. Known in Massachusetts as a Health Care Proxy.

Memorial Service - A funeral service in which the body is either not present or in the form of cremated remains.

Mental Health Services - Variety of services provided to people of all ages, including counseling, psychotherapy, psychiatric services, crisis intervention, and support groups. Issues addressed include depression, grief, anxiety, stress, as well as severe mental illnesses.

Modality - Methods of treatment.

Mortality Rate - The death rate often made explicit for a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, sex, or specific cause of death). Mortality rate contains three essential elements: the number of people in a population exposed to the risk of death (denominator), a time factor, and the number of deaths occurring in the exposed population during a certain time period (the numerator).

P

Pain Management - A branch of medicine that focuses on easing the suffering and improving the quality of life of those living with pain.

Palliative Care - This is care that provides comfort and treatment but will not cure the condition. This allows individuals with chronic conditions to live comfortably.

Patient - An individual who receives health, homemaker or hospice services at home from an individual employed by a home health agency or a hospice program.

Periods Of Care (Hospice) - A set period of time that you can get hospice care after your doctor says that you are eligible and still need hospice care.

Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS) - Medical communications alerting systems that allow an elder experiencing a medical emergency at home to access medical service via an electronic transmitter to a central monitoring station.

Personal Representative - Also called an Executor, this is a person appointed in a will to handle the probate of a deceased person's estate (assets). The Personal Representative must make an inventory of the descendant's property, collect debts, satisfy creditors, distribute the decedent's property to beneficiaries of the will, pay any taxes due and prepare a final accounting to the probate court.

Power Of Attorney - A power of attorney is a document that lets you appoint someone you trust to make decisions about your financial care.

Q

Quality Of Life - Includes self perceived health status, mental status, sexual function and stress level, helps to explain an individual's general well-being.

R

Religious Accommodation - No person shall be considered to be abused or neglected for the reason that such person, in accordance with his/her express or implied consent, is being furnished or relies upon treatment by spiritual means through prayer alone in accordance with a religious method of healing in lieu of medical treatment.

Respite - The in-home care of a chronically ill beneficiary intended to give the caregiver a rest. Can also be provided in a hospice or nursing home (as with hospice respite care).

Respite Care - The in-home care of a chronically ill beneficiary intended to give the caregiver a rest. Can also be provided in a hospice or nursing home (as with hospice respite care).

S

Severity Of Illness - A risk prediction system to correlate the "seriousness" of a disease in a particular patient with the statistically "expected" outcome, e.g. mortality, morbidity, efficiency of care.

Spirituality - The deepest values and beliefs by which people live as they try to understand the meaning behind their own existence.

V

Visit - An encounter between a patient and a health care professional which requires either the patient to travel from his home to the professional's usual place of practice (an office visit), or for the doctor or other health care provider to see the patient in the hospital, skilled nursing facility, or in the patient's home. Doctors' services can be covered in any of these settings under Medicare.

Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) - A voluntary health agency which provides nursing and other services in the home. Basic services include health supervision, education and counseling; beside care; and the carrying out of physicians' orders. Personnel include nurses and home health aides who are trained for specific tasks of personal bedside care. These agencies had their origin in the visiting or district nursing provided to sick poor in their homes by voluntary agencies.

[Back To Top](#)

W

Will - The legal document in which a person specifies how his/her estate (assets) will be distributed following his/her death.

[Back To Top](#)