

MEDICAL WELL-BEING CROSSROAD

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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A

Abstract - Is the collection of information from the medical record via hard copy or electronic instrument.

Abuse (personal) - Includes the physical, mental financial and sexual abuse of an older adult. Physical includes hitting, slapping, kicking, and restraining. Neglect includes the failure to provide necessities for physical, intellectual, and emotional well-being. Financial Exploitation includes the unauthorized use of an older person's money or property. Emotional Abuse includes threats, humiliation, intimidation, yelling, brow-beating or name calling. Sexual includes any unwarranted sexual advances.

Accessibility - As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, removal of barriers that would hinder a person with a disability from entering, functioning, and working within a facility. Required restructuring of the facility cannot cause undue hardship for the employer.

Accredited (Accreditation) - Means having a seal of approval. Being accredited means that a facility or health care organization has met certain quality standards. These standards are set by private, nationally recognized groups that check on the quality of care at health care facilities and organizations. Organizations that accredit Medicare Managed Care Plans include the National Committee for Quality Assurance, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations, and the American Accreditation HealthCare Commission/URAC.

Activities Of Daily Living (ADLs) - Self-care tasks/activities, including the ability to bathe/shower, dress/undress, eat, voluntarily control urinary and fecal discharge, transfer in and out of bed or chair, and walk, which are used to measure the Functional Impairment Level of an Applicant or a Client.

Acute Care - Care that is generally provided for a short period of time to treat a certain illness or condition. This type of care can include short-term hospital stays, doctor's visits, surgery, and X-rays.

Acute Hospital - A hospital which provides care for persons who have a crisis, intense or severe illness or condition which requires urgent restorative care.

Acute Illness - Illness that is usually short-term and that often comes on quickly.

Advance Directive (Health Care) - Written ahead of time, a health care advance 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. A health care advance directive may include a Living Will and a Durable Power of Attorney for health care.

Advance Directives - A written document stating how you want medical decisions to be made if you lose the ability to make them for yourself. It may include a Living Will and a Durable Power of Attorney for health care.

Advanced Medical Directive - A legal document that describes the medical treatment a person desires.

Advocate - A person who gives you support or protects your rights.

Affiliated Provider - A health care provider or facility that is paid by a health plan to give service to plan members.

Age Related Macular Degeneration - Damage to the retina occurs creating vision loss. This usually occurs in older adults. There are two forms; dry and wet forms. Dry macular degeneration the cells in the macula slowly start to break down. In wet macular degeneration occurs when blood vessels begin to grow behind the macula.

AI-Anon - An organization for friends and family affected by individuals who abuse alcohol.

Albumin - One class of simple proteins in the blood. The level of albumin may reflect the amount of protein intake in food.

Alcoholics Anonymous - An organization that holds regular support group meetings for individuals who abuse alcohol in many different locations.

Allied Health - A term used to describe the many therapeutic and supportive service professionals you will find in the medical care system.

Alzheimer's Disease - A progressive, irreversible disease characterized by degeneration of the brain cells and severe loss of memory, causing the individual to become dysfunctional and dependent upon others for basic living needs.

Ambulance (Air Or Water) - An air or water vehicle specifically designed, equipped, and staffed for life saving and transporting the sick or injured.

Ambulance (Land) - A land vehicle specifically designed, equipped, and staffed for life saving and transporting the sick or injured.

Ambulatory Care - All types of health services which are provided on an outpatient basis, in contrast to services provided in the home or to persons who are inpatients. While many inpatients may be ambulatory, the term ambulatory care usually implies that the patient must travel to a location to receive services which do not require an overnight stay.

Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions (ACSC) - ACSC conditions are medical conditions for which physicians broadly concur that a substantial proportion of cases should not advance to the point where hospitalization is needed if they are treated in a timely fashion with adequate primary care and managed properly on an outpatient basis.

Ambulatory Surgical Center - A place other than a hospital that does outpatient surgery. At an ambulatory (in and out) surgery center, you may stay for only a few hours or for one night.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) - Legislation passed in 1990 which establishes comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability.

Ancillary Services - Professional services by a hospital or other inpatient health program. These may include x-ray, drug, laboratory, or other services.

Anemia - A condition occurring when the blood is deficient in red blood cells and/or hemoglobin which decrease the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood.

Anesthesia - Drugs that a person is given before surgery so he/she will not feel pain. Anesthesia should always be given by a doctor or a specially trained nurse.

Arthritis - Inflammation of the joint

Aromatherapy - Based on the use of essential oils from flowers, leaves, branches, barks and roots of plants for healing purposes. It is a form of complementary and alternative medicine. It is believed that the aromas from these essential oils stimulate the brain or are absorbed through the skin into the bloodstream where they can promote healing.

Assessment - The gathering of information to rate or evaluate your health and needs, such as in a long-term care facility.

Atherosclerosis - The process of hardening or thickening of the artery walls due to fat deposits on their inner lining.

Attending Physician - The licensed physician who would normally be expected to certify and recertify the medical necessity of the number of services rendered and/or who has primary responsibility for the patient's medical care and treatment.

Attending Physician's Statement (APS) - Report from your doctor or a medical facility that has treated you, providing information such as medical history, medications, and diagnoses.

Authoritative Approval - Method or type of approval that requires a determination that the service is likely to have a diagnostic or therapeutic benefit for patients for whom it is intended.

Authoritative Evidence - Written medical or scientific conclusions demonstrating the medical effectiveness of a service produced by the following:

- Controlled clinical trials, published in peer-reviewed medical or scientific journals;
- Controlled clinical trials completed and accepted for publication in peer-reviewed medical or scientific journals;
- Assessments initiated by CMS;
- Evaluations or studies initiated by Medicare contractors;
- Case studies published in peer-reviewed medical or scientific journals that present treatment protocols.

B

Blood Pressure - The pressure exerted by the blood against the walls of the blood vessels, especially the arteries. It may vary with one's age and physical and mental health.

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Blood Urea Nitrogen - The term BUN refers to the substance urea, which is the major breakdown product of protein metabolism, and is ordinarily removed by the kidneys. During kidney failure, urea accumulates in proportion to the degree of kidney failure and to the amount of protein breakdown. The symptoms of uremia correspond roughly to the amount of urea in the blood stream.

Body Fat - The percent of body mass that is only fat.

Bone Mineral Density (BMD) - Measurement of the amount of calcium in the bones

Brown Spots - Sometimes referred to as liver or age spots; the spots of skin pigmentation develop due to long term exposure of the sun.

C

Cadaveric Transplant - The surgical procedure of excising a kidney from a deceased individual and implanting it into a suitable recipient.

Cancer - A group of many related diseases that begin in cells, the body's basic unit of life.

Cardiology - Medical specialty which focuses on the heart, its functions, diseases, and abnormalities.

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.

Care Plan - A written plan for your care. It tells what services you will get to reach and keep your best physical, mental, and social well being. See [service plan](#) and [treatment plan](#).

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.

Case Management - A process used by a doctor, nurse, social worker or other professional to manage your health care. Case managers make sure that you get needed services, and track your use of facilities and resources.

Case Manager - A nurse, doctor, or social worker who arranges all services that are needed to give proper care to a consumer.

Catastrophic Illness - A very serious and costly health problem that could be life threatening or cause life-long disability. The cost of medical services alone for this type of serious condition could cause you financial hardship.

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Catheter - A medical device, usually a long flexible tube, inserted into a body cavity to allow for fluids to pass.

Central Mass Family Caregiver Support Program (CMFCSP) - A program designed to give education, training and assistance to caregivers. This is a federally funded program.

Chemotherapy - A treatment that uses drugs to treat an illness, especially used when treating cancer.

Chiropractic - A system of healing based on the idea that the relationship between the spinal column and function in the human body is a significant health factor and the normal transmission of nerve energy is essential to the restoration and maintenance of health. Chiropractic does not attempt to treat a disease but rather to improve the hosts defense abilities and mechanisms to assist the body to heal itself.

Cholesterol - The most common steroid in the body. There are two types of cholesterol: low density lipoprotein (LDL) and high density lipoprotein (HDL). LDL is known as "bad cholesterol" because high levels of LDL leads to an increased risk of heart disease. HDL is known as "good" cholesterol.

Chronically Ill - Having a long lasting or recurrent illness or condition that causes a person to need help with Activities of Daily Living and often other health and support services, for example Parkinson's Disease or Alzheimer's disease. At a minimum, the condition is expected to last for at least 90 consecutive days.

Chronic Illness - Long-term or permanent illness, e.g., diabetes, arthritis, which often results in some type of disability and which may require a person to seek help with various activities.

Chronic Maintenance Dialysis - Dialysis that is regularly furnished to an ESRD patient in a hospital based independent (non-hospital based), or home setting.

Clinical Breast Exam - An exam by your doctor/health care provider to check for breast cancer by feeling and looking at your breasts. This exam is not the same as a mammogram and is usually done in the doctor's office during your Pap test and pelvic exam.

Clinical Performance Measure - This is a method or instrument to estimate or monitor the extent to which the actions of a health care practitioner or provider conform to practice guidelines, medical review criteria, or standards of quality.

Clinical Practice Guidelines - Reports written by experts who have carefully studied whether a treatment works and which patients are most likely to be helped by it.

Colonoscopy - An examination of the colon using a colonoscope.

Commonwealth Of Massachusetts Board Of Registration In Medicine - Keeps detailed information about the licensing status, areas of medical specialty, hospital affiliations, education and training, as well as discipline history of each licensed doctor in Massachusetts.

Comprehensive Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility - A facility that provides comprehensive rehabilitation services under the supervision of a physician to inpatients with physical disabilities. Services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, social or psychological services, and orthotics and prosthetics services.

Comprehensive Outpatient Rehabilitation Facility - A facility that provides comprehensive rehabilitation services under the supervision of a physician to outpatients with physical disabilities. Services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech pathology services.

Confidentiality - Is an understanding that certain information will not be disclosed to other individuals without expressed permission. This term is used in many settings i.e. medical, social services, human services, financial and legal.

Continenence - Ability to maintain control of bowel and bladder functions; or when unable to maintain control these functions, the ability to perform associated personal hygiene (including caring for a catheter or colostomy bag). One of the six Activities of Daily Living.

Coronary Heart Disease - Narrowing of the arteries due to the buildup of fatty material in the walls of the coronary arteries.

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

Crisis Residential Treatment Services - Treatment provided during a crisis that is short term and not based in a hospital. This treatment centers around stabilizing the situation, avoiding hospitalizations and determining the next steps to be taken.

Critical Access Hospital - A small facility that gives limited outpatient and inpatient hospital services to people in rural areas.

Custodial Care - Non-skilled, personal care, such as help with activities of daily living like bathing, dressing, eating, getting in or out of a bed or chair, moving round, and using the bathroom. It may also include care that most people do themselves, like using eye drops. In most cases, Medicare doesn't pay for custodial care.

D

Dedicated Alzheimer/Dementia Units - Units within a licensed Long Term Care Facility that are dedicated to individuals with a probable diagnosis of Alzheimer's or dementia. These units tailor daily care and activities to the specific needs of individuals with Alzheimer's or related dementia.

Dehydration - A serious condition where your body's loss of fluid is more than your body's intake of fluid.

Dementia - Term which describes a group of diseases (including Alzheimer's disease) which are characterized by memory loss and other declines in mental functioning.

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.

Detoxification - A treatment for addiction to drugs or alcohol intended to rid the body of the addictive substances.

Diabetic Durable Medical Equipment - Purchased or rented ambulatory items, such as glucose meters and insulin infusion pumps, prescribed by a health care provider for use in managing a patient's diabetes.

Diabetes - High levels of sugar in the blood. It is caused by the body's inability to produce or properly use insulin. Insulin converts starches and sugar into energy for the body. Type 1 diabetes is when the body does not produce insulin. Type 2 diabetes is when the cells ignore insulin or the body does not produce enough insulin.

Diagnosis - The name for the health condition that you have.

Dialysate - Dialysate or the dialysate fluid is the solution used in dialysis to remove excess fluids and waste products from the blood.

Dialysis - Dialysis is a treatment that cleans your blood when your kidneys don't work. It gets rid of harmful wastes and extra salt and fluids that build up in your body. It also helps control blood pressure and helps your body keep the right amount of fluids. Dialysis treatments help you feel better and live longer, but they are not a cure for permanent kidney failure. See [hemodialysis](#) and [peritoneal dialysis](#).

Dialysis Center (Renal) - A hospital unit that is approved to furnish the full spectrum of diagnostic, therapeutic, and rehabilitative services required for the care of the ESRD dialysis patients (including inpatient dialysis) furnished directly or under arrangement.

Dialysis Station - A portion of the dialysis patient treatment area which accommodates the equipment necessary to provide a hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis treatment. This station must have sufficient area to house a chair or bed, the dialysis equipment, and emergency equipment if needed. Provision for privacy is ordinarily supplied by drapes or screens.

Diarrhea - Frequent discharge of fluid or semisolid fecal matter from the bowel.

Diethylstilbestrol (DES) - A drug given to pregnant women from the early 1940s until 1971 to help with common problems during pregnancy. The drug has been linked to cancer of the cervix or vagina in women whose mother took the drug while pregnant.

Digital Imaging And Communications In Medicine - A standard for communicating images, such as x-rays, in a digitized form. This standard could become part of the HIPAA claim attachments standards.

Discharge - A formal termination of inpatient care.

Discharge Planning - A process used to decide what a patient needs for a smooth move from one level of care to another. This is done by a social worker or other health care professional. It includes moves from a hospital to a rehabilitation center, nursing home or to home care. Discharge planning may also include the services of home health agencies to help with the patient's home care.

Disease - A pathological condition of a part, organ or system of an organism resulting from various causes such as infection, genetic defect or environmental stress and characterized by an identifiable group of signs or symptoms.

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.

Dressing - Putting on and taking off all items of clothing and any necessary braces, fasteners or artificial limbs. One of the six Activities of Daily Living.

E

Edema - The accumulation of excess water in a body part.

Ejaculation - Discharge of seminal fluid from the urethra during an orgasm.

Elder Abuse - An act or omission which results in serious physical or emotional injury to an elderly person; this includes financial exploitation. Protective Service Agencies receive and investigate reports of elder abuse or neglect. The purpose of Protective Services is to prevent, eliminate or remedy the effects of abuse to an elderly person.

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.

EMTALA (Emergency Medical Treatment And Active Labor Act) - The Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act, codified at 42 U.S.C. § 1395dd. EMTALA requires any Medicare-participating hospital that operates a hospital emergency department to provide an appropriate medical screening examination to any patient that requests such an examination. If the hospital determines that the patient has an emergency medical condition, it must either stabilize the patient's condition or arrange for a transfer; however, the hospital may only transfer the patient if the medical benefits of the transfer outweigh the risks or if the patient requests the transfer. CMS regulations at 42 C.F.R. §§ 489.24(b) and 413.65(g) further clarify the statutory language.

Endocrinology - Medical specialty which studies the structure and functions of hormones and endocrine glands in addition to the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the endocrine system.

End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) - Permanent kidney failure. That stage of renal impairment that appears irreversible and permanent, and requires a regular course of dialysis or kidney transplantation to maintain life.

End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network - A group of private organizations that make sure you are getting the best possible care. ESRD networks also keep your facility aware of important issues about kidney dialysis and transplants.

End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Patient - A person with irreversible and permanent kidney failure who requires a regular course of dialysis or kidney transplantation to maintain life.

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End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Services - The type of care or service furnished to an End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) patient. Such types of care are transplantation; dialysis; outpatient dialysis; staff assisted dialysis; home dialysis; and self-dialysis and home dialysis training.

End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Treatment Facility - A facility, other than a hospital, which provides dialysis treatment, maintenance, and/or training to patients or caregivers on an ambulatory or home-care basis.

Erection - Occurs when the penis fills with blood and is rigid.

Erythema - Caused by capillary dilation that results in redness, it is usually a sign of a pathological condition.

F

Fecal Occult Blood Test - A test to look for hidden blood in the stool.

Formal Caregiver - An individual paid to provide care.

G

Gastroenterology - Medical specialty which is comprised of the study, diagnosis, and treatment of disorders of the stomach, intestines, and related organs.

Geriatrician - Physician who is certified in the care of older people.

Geriatrics - Medical specialty focusing on treatment of health problems of the elderly.

Gerontology - Study of the biological, psychological and social processes of aging.

Gerontologist - A professional who specializes in elder care. Usually has a degree in psychology sociology, nursing or other related field. Usually works with elders to evaluate and assists individuals, groups and families. Also could conduct research in the field of aging relating to the biological, sociological and psychological phenomena associated with aging.

H

Habilitation Therapy - A professional conducts an assessment with a consumer who has a diagnosed disability and their caregivers to offer suggestions on how to maximize the consumer's remaining skills.

Handicap Placard/Plate - The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles determines eligibility and provides an individual with a disability, whether they are the owner, operator or a passenger of a vehicle, with the right to park in spaces designated for persons with a disability.

Health Care Provider - A person who is trained and licensed to give health care. Also, a place that is licensed to give health care. Doctors, nurses, and hospitals are examples of health care providers.

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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.

Hematology - Medical specialty involving the study, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of blood and bone marrow diseases. This includes morphology, physiology, and pathology.

Hemodialysis (HD) - This treatment is usually done in a dialysis facility but can be done at home with the proper training and supplies. HD uses a special filter (called a dialyzer or artificial kidney) to clean your blood. The filter connects to a machine. During treatment, your blood flows through tubes into the filter to clean out wastes and extra fluids. Then the newly cleaned blood flows through another set of tubes and back into your body. See [dialysis](#) and [peritoneal dialysis](#).

Hemofiltration - Fluid removal.

High Blood Pressure - Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the blood vessel walls. High blood pressure is when that force, as measured by a blood pressure cuff, is elevated above normal limits.

Holistic Medicine - An approach to healing that includes alternative treatments such as acupuncture, chiropractics, Reiki and vital maze healing (also called meditation labyrinths). Commonly referred to as complimentary medicine, these treatments can be done in addition to traditional treatment methods. The philosophy behind holistic medicine is that the body, mind, and spirit are all connected and all three need to be cared for simultaneously in order to be healthy.

Home Patients - Medically-able individuals, who have their own dialysis equipment at home and after proper training, perform their own dialysis treatment alone or with the assistance of a helper.

Hospital - An institution whose primary function is to provide inpatient diagnostic and therapeutic services for a variety of medical conditions, both surgical and nonsurgical.

Hospitalist - A physician who specializes in the care of hospitalized patients. Trained and certified internist.

Hospital Log - Kept in the hospital room in order to write down the names of any doctors or specialists that visit the older adult. Also to write down new medications and any tests done with the results as you receive them. You should ask questions about anything that is unclear and write down the answers in the Hospital Log so that you will remember them later. If there are other members of the CareTeam who spend time with the older adult in the hospital while you're not present they can write down any updates in the Hospital Log. After a hospital stay this log will then be added to the CareTeam binder.

Hydration - This is the level of fluid in the body. The loss of fluid, or dehydration, occurs when you lose more water or fluid than you take in. Your body cannot keep adequate blood pressure, get enough oxygen and nutrients to the cells, or get rid of wastes if it has too little fluid.

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Hypertension - High blood pressure. Usually having a systolic blood pressure above 140 mmHg or a diastolic blood pressure above 90 mmHg would be defined as Hypertension.

I

Immunosuppressive Drugs - Transplant drugs used to reduce the risk of rejecting the new kidney after transplant. Transplant patients will need to take these drugs for the rest of their lives.

Impotence - The inability of a male to achieve an erection.

Insomnia - The inability to sleep.

Immunization - Immunizations work by stimulation the immune system; they allow the healthy immune system to recognize viruses and bacteria and create antibodies to fight them. Immunizations are also known as vaccines.

Indigent Care - Health services provided to the poor or those unable to pay. Since many indigent patients are not eligible for federal or state programs, the costs which are covered by Medicaid are generally recorded separately from indigent care costs.

Infectious Disease - A medical specialty dealing with diseases transmitted only by a specific kind of contact.

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

Influenza - A contagious, acute viral infection that is usually characterized by fever, chills, inflammation of respiratory tract and muscle pain. Also known as the flu.

Insulin - A hormone that controls the level of glucose in the body and helps the body use glucose for energy.

Internist - A doctor who finds and treats health problems in adults.

Isometric Exercise - Exercise that strengthens muscles by pushing parts of the body against a fixed object or each other making sure that the muscles are stressed but stretched only a little.

L

Libido - Sexual desire.

Licensed Nursing Care - Health service ordered by a physician that requires the skills of registered nurses, licensed practicing nurses, physical therapist, occupational therapists or other skilled personnel.

Licensed Practicing Nurse - Type of nurse who is trained to provide a range of health care services and administer technical nursing procedures. They have obtained one year of education outside of high school and have passed the state licensing exam.

Ligament - Fibrous tissue that connects two or more bones or cartilages.

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Limited Medication Administration - A service available in assisted living facilities that allows a licensed practitioner or family member to administer medication to the individual.

Long-Term Care Facility - Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF) include nursing homes, rehabilitation and residential care facilities (rest homes and assisted living facilities), as well as continuing care retirement communities. They provide a range of medical and or social services designed to help people who have disabilities or chronic care needs. Services may be short or long term.

M

Malignant - Occurring in severe form and getting worse; resistant to treatment.

Malnutrition - A health problem caused by the lack (or too much) of needed nutrients.

Mammogram - A special x-ray of the breasts. Medicare covers the cost of a mammogram once a year for women over 40.

MassMedLine - A free prescription drug information and referral service for Massachusetts residents. The program is a public service project of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (MCPHS).

Medic Alert Bracelet - A tool designed for individuals with a known medical diagnosis or allergy. It is also worn by individuals who are at risk of wandering. Identification information is in a national registry that is accessible to all emergency personnel. The client wears the bracelet with all of the coded information.

Medically Necessary - Services or supplies that: are proper and needed for the diagnosis or treatment of your medical condition, are provided for the diagnosis, direct care, and treatment of your medical condition, meet the standards of good medical practice in the local area, and are not mainly for the convenience of you or your doctor.

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.

Medication Dispensing System - A machine that signals an alert when medication is to be taken. It is connected to a Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) and a call center is notified if the medication is not taken. The machine can be preloaded up to 40 days.

Mental Health - The capacity of an individual to successfully meet the daily demands of life in order to function in society. Mental health encompasses both emotional and psychological well-being. It is influenced by one's biology, environment, emotional state, and cultural factors. Often mental health is defined as the absence of any identifiable or significant mental disorder.

Mistreatment - Any action that is likely to harm an individual. Mistreatment may be in the forms of the use of medications or treatments, isolation, or physical or chemical restraints which harm or are likely to harm the patient or resident.

Modality - Methods of treatment.

Morbidity - A diseased state, often used in the context of a "morbidity rate", i.e. the rate of disease or proportion of diseased people in a population. In common clinical usage, any disease state, including diagnosis and complications is referred to as morbidity.

Morbidity Rate - The rate of illness in a population. The number of people ill during a time period divided by the number of people in the total population.

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).

Myocardial Infarction - Term referring to a heart attack. This term focuses on the heart muscle and the changes that occur when there is a deprivation of circulating blood.

N

Narcotics Anonymous - An organization for individuals addicted to narcotic drugs.

Nebulizers - Equipment to give medicine in a mist form to your lungs.

Neglect - When caregivers do not give a person the care or the goods or services needed to avoid harm or illness. It may also refer to when an older adult does not recognize the negative consequences of not accessing goods or services for him/herself which may result in harm or illness.

Nephrology - Medical specialty concerning the structure, functions and disease of the kidneys.

Neurology - Medical specialty which deals with the structure of the nervous system and associated diseases.

Nurse - An individual trained to care for the sick, aged, or injured. Can be defined as a professional qualified by education and authorized by law to practice nursing.

Nurse Aide - An individual who is not a licensed health professional but is employed by a facility which provides nursing or nursing- related services to residents.

Nursing Care - Health service ordered by a physician that require the skills of registered nurses, licensed practicing nurses, physical therapist, occupational therapists or other skilled personnel.

Nursing Facility - A facility which primarily provides to residents skilled nursing care and relate services for the rehabilitation of injured, disabled, or sick persons, or on a regular basis, health related care services above the level of custodial care to other than individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Nurse Practitioner - A nurse who has two or more years of advanced training and has passed a special exam. A nurse practitioner often works with a doctor and can do some of the same things a doctor does.

O

Obesity - Being above normal body weight. The National Institutes of Health defines obesity as a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or over.

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Occupational Therapy - Services given to help you return to usual activities (such as bathing, preparing meals, housekeeping) after illness.

Oncology - Medical specialty devoted to cancer. It deals specifically with tumors, their development, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

Organ - Organ means for example a human kidney, liver, heart, or pancreas.

Orthotics - Devices that correct or support the function of body parts. Examples include leg, arm and neck braces.

Osteoporosis - Bone disease characterized by a reduction in bone density. The bones become porous and brittle, as a result of calcium loss. Someone with osteoporosis is more vulnerable to breaking a bone.

Organ Procurement - The process of acquiring donor organs.

Organ Procurement Organization - An organization that performs or coordinates the retrieval, preservation, and transportation of organs and maintains a system of locating prospective recipients for available organs.

Outpatient Care - Medical or surgical care that does not include an overnight hospital stay.

Outpatient Hospital - A portion of a hospital which provides diagnostic, therapeutic (both surgical and nonsurgical), and rehabilitation services to sick or injured persons who do not require hospitalization or institutionalization. Part of the Hospital providing services covered by SMI, including services in an emergency room or outpatient clinic, ambulatory surgical procedures, medical supplies such as splints, laboratory tests billed by the hospital, etc.

Outpatient Hospital Care - Medical or surgical care provided by a hospital to you if you have not been admitted as an inpatient but are registered on hospital records as an outpatient. If a doctor orders that you must be placed under observation, it may be considered outpatient care, even if you stay under observation overnight

Outpatient Services - A service you get in one day (24 hours) at a hospital outpatient department or community mental health center.

P

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.

Pap Test - A test to check for cancer of the cervix, the opening to a woman's womb. It is done by removing cells from the cervix. The cells are then prepared so they can be seen under a microscope.

Parkinson's Disease - A degenerative disease of later life, characterized by a rhythmic tremor and muscular rigidity caused by degeneration in the basal gland of the brain.

Partnership of Prescription Assistance (PPA) - Sponsored by private pharmaceutical companies to help individuals locate public and private programs to assist with the cost of medications. Each program has different eligibility requirements.

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Patient Advocate - A hospital employee whose job is to speak on a patient's behalf and help patients get information or services they need.

Patient Lifts - Equipment to move a patient from a bed or wheelchair using your strength or a motor.

Pelvic Exam - An exam to check if internal female organs are normal by feeling their shape and size.

Peritoneal Dialysis (PD) - PD uses a cleaning solution, called dialysate, which flows through a special tube into your abdomen. After a few hours, the dialysate gets drained from your abdomen, taking the wastes from your blood with it. Then you fill your abdomen with fresh dialysate and the cleaning process begins again. This treatment can be done at home, at your workplace, or at another convenient location. See [dialysis](#) and [hemodialysis](#).

Personal Health Record - Medical record that contains a summary of all accurate medical and health history.

Physical Therapy - Treatment of injury and disease by mechanical means, such as heat, light, exercise, and massage.

Physician Assistant (PA) - A person who has two or more years of advanced training and has passed a special exam. A physician assistant works with a doctor and can do some of the things a doctor does.

Podiatrist - A licensed medical professional who treats injuries and diseases of the foot. Examples of common problems include ingrown toenails, hammer toe, deformities, bunion deformities and heel spurs. Medicare does not generally pay for routine foot care such as cutting and removal of corns and calluses, trimming of nails and other hygienic care.

Polyp - A nonmalignant growth on the surface of a mucous membrane.

Prescription Advantage - The nation's first state-sponsored prescription drug insurance plan for elders and younger people with disabilities. Prescription Advantage is available to all Massachusetts residents age 65 and older, as well as younger individuals with disabilities who meet income and employment guidelines.

Preventive Medicine - Care which has the aim of preventing disease or its consequences. It includes health care programs aimed at warding off illnesses, (e.g., immunizations), early detection of disease (e.g., Pap smears), and inhibiting further deterioration of the body (e.g., exercise or prophylactic surgery). Preventive medicine is also concerned with general prevention measures aimed at improving the healthfulness of the environment.

Primary Care Physician (PCP) - A doctor who is trained to give you basic care. Your primary care physician is the doctor you see first for most health problems. He/she makes sure that you get the care that you need to keep you healthy. He/she may talk with other doctors and health care providers about your care and refer you to them. In many Medicare managed care plans, you must see your primary care physician before you see any other health care provider.

Private Contract - A contract between you and a doctor, podiatrist, dentist, or optometrist who has decided not to offer services through the Medicare program. This doctor can't bill Medicare for any service or supplies given to you and all his/her other Medicare patients for at least two years. There are no limits on what you can be charged for services under a private contract. You must pay the full amount of the bill.

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Prostate - A chestnut shaped gland within the male reproductive system located below the bladder. It produces the fluid part of semen.

Protein - A molecule composed of one or more amino acids. Proteins are essential components of skin, muscle and bones. They are also required for the function, structure of the body's organs, tissues and cells.

Prostheses - Devices that substitute for a missing body part. Examples include artificial legs, arms and eyes.

Prosthetic Device - Medical equipment (other than dental) that replaces all or part of an internal body organ.

Q

Quality Of Care - Can be defined as a measure of the degree to which delivered health services meet established professional standards and judgments of value to the consumer.

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

Radiation Therapy - Can be either internal or external therapy. It is a treatment that uses high energy x-rays to treat diseases, usually cancer. The internal method uses radioactive material that is placed inside the body, as close as it can be to the cancer. The external method uses a machine that directs high energy x-rays at the cancer.

Referral (Medical) - A written OK from your primary care doctor for you to see a specialist or get certain services. In many Medicare Managed Care Plans, you need to get a referral before you can get care from anyone except your primary care doctor. If you don't get a referral first, the plan may not pay for your care.

Rehabilitation (As Distinguished From Vocational Rehabilitation) - A restorative process through which an individual develops and maintains self-sufficient functioning consistent with his/her capability.

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.

Remission - Refers to the complete or partial disappearance of symptoms of a chronic condition.

Renal Transplant Center - A hospital unit that is approved to furnish transplantation and other medical and surgical specialty services directly for the care of End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) transplant patients, including inpatient dialysis furnished directly or under arrangement.

Respiratory Therapy - The diagnostic evaluation, management, and treatment of the care of patients with deficiencies and abnormalities in the cardiopulmonary (heart-lung) system.

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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).

Restraints - Physical restraints are any manual method or physical or mechanical device, material, or equipment attached to or adjacent to the residents body that the individual cannot remove easily which restricts freedom of movement or normal access to one's body. Chemical restraints are any drug used for discipline or convenience and not required to treat medical symptoms.

S

Screening - The use of quick procedures to differentiate apparently well persons who have a disease or a high risk of disease from those who probably do not have the disease.

Second Opinion - This is when another doctor gives his or her view about what you have and how it should be treated.

Secondary Care - Services provided by medical specialists who generally do not have first contact with patients, e.g., cardiologist, urologists, dermatologists.

Self Dialysis - Dialysis performed with little or no professional assistance (except in emergency situations) by an End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) patient who has completed an appropriate course of training, in a dialysis facility or at home.

Senility - The generalized characterization of progressive decline in mental functioning as a condition of the aging process. Within geriatric medicine, this term has limited meaning and is often substituted for the diagnosis of senile dementia and/or senile psychosis.

Service Plan - Also referred to as a [care plan](#) or [treatment plan](#). Written document which outlines the types and frequency of the long-term care services that a consumer receives. It may include treatment goals for him or her for a specified time period.

Serving The Health Information Needs Of Elders (S.H.I.N.E.) Program – S.H.I.N.E. Counselors are a network of certified volunteers who assist Medicare beneficiaries age 62 and over and younger individuals with disabilities. These volunteers are trained to provide individual unbiased information on health insurance options including Medicare, Medicare Supplemental Plans, Medicare Part D (drug coverage), MassHealth (Medicaid) and free hospital care.

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.

Side Effect - A problem caused by treatment. For example, medicine you take for high blood pressure may make you feel sleepy. Most treatments have side effects.

Specialist - A doctor who treats only certain parts of the body, certain health problems, or certain age groups. For example, some doctors treat only heart problems.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program - A State program that gets money from the Federal Government to give free local health insurance counseling to people with Medicare. See [Serving The Health Information Needs Of Elders Program \(S.H.I.N.E.\)](#).

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Stroke - The interruption of the blood supply to the brain.

Substance Abuse - When an individual abuses alcohol, prescription drugs, and/or nonprescription drugs. This can lead to addiction, which often has permanent negative effects on a person.

Sun Protection Factor (SPF) - A scale rating of the degree of protection provided by sunscreen.

Sundown Syndrome - Causes confusion after the sun goes down. This is common with individuals with Alzheimer's or other related dementia. Not all individuals with Alzheimer's or other related dementia will suffer from sundown syndrome. In individuals who exhibit symptoms of Alzheimer's or other related dementia, symptoms may worsen when the sun goes down, other individuals will not show symptoms of Alzheimer's or dementia until after the sun is down.

Support Groups - Groups of people who share a common bond, e.g., caregivers, who come together on a regular basis to share problems and experiences. May be sponsored by social service agencies, senior centers, religious organizations, as well as organizations such as Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging.

T

Target Heart Rate - The heart rate desired during exercise.

Telecommunications Device For The Deaf (TDD) - A Teletype machine that assists individuals with hearing impairments and communication disorders to converse over the phone.

Testosterone - A male sex hormone. It is a principle androgenic hormone that is produced in the testes. It is responsible for some secondary male sex characteristics.

Transplant - The surgical procedure that involves removing a functional organ from either a deceased or living donor and implanting it in a patient needing a functional organ to replace their nonfunctional organ.

Traumatic Brain Injury - An externally caused head injury that has resulted in severe functional deficits.

Treatment - Something done to help with a health problem. For example, medicine and surgery are treatments.

Treatment Options - The choices you have when there is more than one way to treat your health problem.

Treatment Plan - Frequently referred to as [care plan](#) or [service plan](#). Written document which outlines the types and frequency of the long-term care services that a consumer receives. It may include treatment goals for him or her for a specified time period.

TTY - A teletypewriter (TTY) is a communication device used by people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a severe-speech impairment. A TTY consists of a keyboard, display screen, and modem. Messages travel over regular telephone lines. People who don't have a TTY can communicate with a TTY user through a message relay center (MRC). An MRC has TTY operators available to send and interpret TTY messages.

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W

Walk-in Clinic - Health care clinics located in retail stores, supermarkets and pharmacies that treat uncomplicated minor illnesses and provide preventative health care services.

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