

Caregiving Glossary

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) – Basic tasks of everyday life that include dressing, bathing, eating, transferring (for example, from bed to chair) and toileting.

Adult Day Services - Structured, comprehensive programs — including a variety of health, social and related support services during any part of the day, but for less than 24 hours — provided at local centers for adults who need some supervision or support.

Adult Foster Care (AFC) homes – Licensed residential settings that provide 24-hour personal care, protection, and supervision for individuals who are developmentally disabled, mentally ill, physically handicapped, aged and those with Alzheimer's Disease or other Dementia Related Disorders who cannot live alone but who do not need continuous nursing care. Care may include assistance with bathing, grooming, dressing, eating, walking, toileting or the administration of medication. AFC Homes are restricted to providing care to no more than 20 adults.

Adult Protective Services (APS) - A public agency that investigates reports of abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults; usually works with law enforcement. Immediate dangerous situations should be directed to 911 or local police.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) or Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) - An agency designated by the state with the responsibility for planning and coordinating services for older people (AAA) or for older people and adults with disabilities (ADRC) within a specific geographical area. Both agencies provide information, resources, assistance and links to community services.

Assisted Living Residences - Housing for those who may need help living independently, but do not need skilled nursing care. The level of assistance varies among residences and may include help with bathing, dressing, meals and housekeeping. May or may not be licensed.

Community Meal Program - Balanced, nutritious meals served at community locations for those ages 60 and over and their younger-age spouses.

Conservator - A person appointed by a court to handle someone's affairs when that person cannot handle them him- or herself. A conservator usually handles only financial affairs.

Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC) - Housing that offers a variety of living options and services, including independent living, assisted living and skilled care, often all on the same campus, and designed to meet a person's changing needs.

Creating Confident Caregivers/SAVVY Caregivers is a six-week educational series for caregivers of persons with dementia. Content focuses on understanding the disease, caregiver self-care and providing structure and support for the person with dementia. Respite care is provided.

Discharge Planner - A professional who assists patients and their families in developing a plan of care for a patient following a hospital or nursing home stay.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order - An order written by a doctor to fulfill a patient's expressed medical care wishes during a medical emergency.

Durable Power of Attorney for Finances (DPOA – finances) - A legal document that allows a person to give authority to someone else to make financial decisions on his or her behalf. The designation "durable" means that it will stay in effect if the person becomes unable to manage his or her own financial affairs.

Extra Help - An assistance program for people with Medicare who need help paying their part of the costs of Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) - A law that requires some employers to let you take unpaid time off work (up to 12 weeks) for illness, having or adopting a baby, or caring for an ill family member. Your job or an equivalent is guaranteed when you return. If you work for a small employer or are a new employee, you may not be able to get the leave.

Family Caregiver - Anyone who provides unpaid assistance to another person who is ill, disabled or needs help with daily activities.

Geriatric Care Manager - A professional who performs an assessment of a person's mental, physical, environmental and financial conditions to create a care plan to assist in arranging housing, medical, social and other services.

Guardian - A person appointed by the court who is responsible for the care and management of another person who has been determined to be incapable of making decisions for him- or herself.

Health Care Power of Attorney (HCPA, or Health Care Proxy often referred to as DPOA - health) - A special kind of durable power of attorney in which individual appoint a another person (agent) to make health care decisions should he or she become unable to do so.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) - A federal law that gives you rights over your health information and sets rules and limits on who can look at and receive your health information. It also permits the release of personal health information needed for patient care.

Home-Delivered Meals - Regular delivery of nutritious meals to homebound people who are unable to prepare food for themselves.

Home for the Aged (HFA) - Licensed residential setting that provides 24-hour personal care, protection, and supervision for individuals 60 years of age or older who are developmentally disabled, mentally ill, physically handicapped, aged and those with Alzheimer's Disease or other Dementia Related Disorders who cannot live alone but who do not need continuous nursing care. Care may include assistance with bathing, grooming, dressing, eating, walking, toileting or the administration of medication. HFAs are restricted to providing care to 21 or more unrelated, non-transient individuals 60 years of age or older.

Home Health Agency (HHA) - An agency often certified by Medicare to provide health-related services in the home, such as nursing, occupational, speech or physical therapy, social work or personal care.

Home Health Care - A wide range of health care services provided in the home. Home care services are either non-medical or skilled.

Non-Medical Care - includes services such as companionship, housekeeping, meal preparation, transportation, shopping, as well as assistance with activities of daily living (ADL) – bathing, eating, toileting, dressing and other personal care tasks. Non-medical care is typically provided by either a homemaker or a home health aide. Home health aides may or may not be Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs). Non-medical care is not covered by Medicare.

Medical Care/Skilled Care – Nursing and rehabilitative care that can be performed only by, or under the supervision of, licensed medical personnel. This care must be ordered by a physician, and must follow a plan of care. Dispensing medication, wound care, and physical or speech therapy all fall under the umbrella of medical home care services, and require a prescription from a doctor.

Home Health Aide - An individual who helps with bathing, dressing, grooming, meals and light housekeeping.

Home Help Services - a Medicaid program that provides funding for eligible individuals to hire someone to assist them with their daily activities. It is designed to support individuals who wish to live independently in their home rather than live in an adult foster care home, home for the aged or nursing facility.

Homemaker Services - A service that provides assistance with general household activities, such as meal preparation, cleaning, laundry and shopping.

Hospice Care - Professionally coordinated support services, including pain and symptom management, social services, and emotional and spiritual support for terminally ill people and their families. The care is provided at home and in other settings.

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) - Basic tasks of everyday life that include managing money, shopping, telephone use, travel in the community, housekeeping, preparing meals and taking medications correctly.

Living Will (Part of a Health Care Directive) - A legal document that communicates a person's wishes about lifesaving medical treatments, should he or she be in a terminal condition and not able to communicate their health care wishes.

Long Term Care - A variety of supports and services provided over an extended period of time to people who need help to perform normal activities of daily living because of cognitive impairment or loss of muscular strength or control. Care may include rehabilitative therapies, skilled nursing, and palliative care, as well as supervision and a wide range of supportive personal care and social services. It may also include training to help older people adjust to or overcome many of the limitations that often come with aging. Long Term Care occurs in the home (community) as well as in nursing facilities.

Long-Term Care Insurance - Insurance that can pay part of the cost of care received in the home, assisted living residences, nursing home care and other designated services, depending on the policy purchased.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman - A person who investigates and resolves complaints on behalf of residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

Meals on Wheels (MOW) - Regular delivery of nutritious meals to homebound people who are unable to prepare food for themselves.

Medicaid - The federal- and state-funded health and long-term care program for people with limited income and assets. It is administered by the states within federal guidelines so eligibility and coverage may differ from state to state. For long-term care services, states have additional eligibility rules.

Medicaid Waiver Program (also known as Project Choices in the Tri-County area of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham or MI-Choice by the State of Michigan) - an alternative to nursing home care. A nurse and social worker team assists eligible individuals, with their families and friends, to design a plan of care. Coordinating and providing key services, while respecting each individual's right to choose their own options, offers clients the opportunity to remain at home or live in the setting of their choice. Tri-County Office on Aging provides this program for Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties.

Medicare - The national health insurance program for people age 65 and older, and for some younger persons with disabilities. Medicare covers hospital stays, doctor visits, prescription drugs and other health care-related services.

Medicare Savings Program - An assistance program for people with Medicare who need help paying their Medicare expenses, such as premiums and possibly copayments and deductibles for Medicare Parts A and B.

Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP) - nationally known as the State Health Assistance Program (SHIP) - a free health-benefit counseling service to educate, counsel and empower Michigan's older adults and individuals with disabilities, and those who serve them, so that they can make informed health benefit decisions. MMAP works through the Area Agencies on Aging to provide high quality and accessible health benefit information and counseling.

National Family Caregiver Support Program - A federally funded program available in local communities that provides a range of supports to assist family caregivers who care for their loved ones at home. Services may include caregiver education, training, information, counseling, links to community services and respite.

Nursing Home - A nursing facility that provides intermediate care (assistance with personal care and activities of daily living) or skilled care (24-hour medical, nursing and rehabilitation care); often a transition from hospital to home. Also called Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF).

PACE (A Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) - a Medicare and Medicaid program that provides a comprehensive health care choice for seniors age 55 and older who desire to live in the community instead of going to a nursing home. The PACE Health Center provides a day program that includes health care, nutritious meals and an opportunity to participate in activities in order to remain active and socialize. Senior Community Care of Michigan provides the PACE program for the tri-county area of Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties and bordering areas of adjacent counties.

Palliative Care - Professionally coordinated services that focus on physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of those with life-threatening illness and their families. The goal is to maintain the highest level of comfort.

Personal Emergency Response System (PERS) - A portable electronic device with a call button that a person can use to summon help in an emergency.

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) - A form that states what kind of medical treatment patients want toward the end of their lives. Printed on bright pink paper and signed by both doctor and patient, it is designed to improve the quality of life. Available in some states and communities.

Project Choices – see Medicaid Waiver Program.

Respite Care - A break from providing care for a loved one. It can be provided by either family or friends, or through programs such as attending an adult day services center. You can also have a paid home care worker come to the home.

Skilled Care – Nursing and rehabilitative care that can be performed only by, or under the supervision of, skilled medical personnel. This care must be ordered by a physician, and must follow a plan of care. Individuals may receive skilled care in a nursing home/rehab facility, therapy center or at their residence.

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) (also known as Skilled Nursing Home/Rehab Center) A state-licensed residential facility that provides a room, meals, help with activities of daily living, recreation, and general nursing care to people who are chronically ill or unable to take care of their daily living needs. It may also be called a Long Term Care Facility. Often skilled nursing facilities provide both short term rehabilitation and long-term care.

SNF short-term rehabilitation - Services designed to improve/restore a person's functioning; includes physical therapy, occupational therapy, and/or speech therapy. Upon discharge from rehab, patients often need follow-up care in their homes. Prior to discharge, nursing home staff coordinate home- and community-based services delivered in the patient's home, such as home health care, home care, medical equipment, etc.

SNF long-term care - health-related care and services needed regularly due to a mental or physical condition – also called basic care or custodial care. Long-term care patients may receive skilled care as well as basic care.

Social Security - A benefit earned by eligible workers that provides guaranteed inflation-adjusted monthly income for life. People with the required number of quarters in Social Security-covered work who are either disabled or age 62 or over, as well as certain family members, are eligible.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) - A monthly benefit to disabled or blind persons who are “insured” by workers’ contributions to the Social Security trust fund. These contributions are based on the individual’s earnings (or those of their spouse or parents) as required by the Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA). Dependents may also be eligible for benefits from the individual’s earnings record.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) - A monthly benefit to people who are 65 and older, disabled or blind, and who have limited income and assets.