

Guide to Senior Living Acronyms and Vocabulary



ADC – Adult Day Care

ADL (or ADLs) – Activities of Daily Living

AL – Assisted Living

ALF – Assisted Living Facility

ALFA – Assisted Living Facility Administrator

CCRC – Continuing Care Retirement Community (also known as Life Plan Community)
These communities offer multiple levels of care, from independent living to assisted living and nursing care, allowing residents to “age in place” without moving off of the community’s campus if their care needs increase. They usually require long-term contracts and a large entry fee. Sometimes referred to as a Life Care Community.

CNA – Certified Nursing Assistant
CNAs assist nursing teams with basic care duties under the supervision of an LPN or RN.

Continuum of Care – this concept refers to the progressive services or spectrum of care that an individual requires as they age.

Dementia – the group of symptoms caused by a number of different diseases or conditions, including memory loss and changes in personality or behavior. Alzheimer’s Disease is the most common form of dementia, affecting over 5 million Americans.

DON – Director of Nursing
The DON at a senior living community oversees all nursing staff and oversees resident care.

DSS – Department of Social Services

FSD – Food Service Director

H & P – History and Physical
This is a requirement for resident admission to any independent living, assisted living, or skilled nursing facility. It is completed by the resident’s discharge physician (if coming from a hospital) or personal physician (if coming from home or a skilled nursing facility). The H & P gives a complete medical history and current medical exam including diagnoses, medications, diets, and overall health status.

HIPAA – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

Hospice versus Palliative Care – The objective of both hospice and palliative care is to provide pain and symptom relief. Hospice, however, is specifically for end-of-life comfort care, when the patient's prognosis is six months or less. Palliative services, however, can be provided at any stage of a disease: at the time of diagnosis, during curative treatment and follow-up, and at the end of life.

HUD – Department of Housing and Urban Development
HUD is a federal agency responsible for national policy and programs that address America's housing needs, improve and develop communities, and enforce fair housing laws.

IL – Independent Living

ISP – Individual Service Plan
A complete plan designed to specify care needs that a resident requires and services that the community will provide. The ISP is completed prior to admission and evaluated after 30 days, annually, or with any changes of condition, and can be completed by a Registered Nurse, Licensed Nurse, Administrator, or other certified individual. The ISP is reviewed with residents and families regularly at scheduled care plan meetings.

LPN – Licensed Practical Nurse
LPNs have about a year of nursing education culminating in a certificate and are generally supervised by a Registered Nurse.

LTC – Long-Term Care

MAR – Medical Administration Record
A record of the medications administered to a patient by a health care provider.

MC – Memory Care

Medicare versus Medicaid – Medicare is a federal insurance program, primarily serving seniors over the age of 65. Medicaid is an assistance program for low-income people of every age. It is run by state and local governments within federal guidelines.

Med Tech (or RMA) – Medication Technician or Registered Medication Technician
Med Techs prepare and administer the correct dosage of medication to patients under supervision of a Registered Nurse.

MC – Memory Care

NP – Nurse Practitioner

OT – Occupational Therapy or Occupational Therapist

Occupational therapy helps people to develop, recover, or maintain their meaningful life activities (or “occupations”).

POA – Power of Attorney

PT – Physical Therapy or Physical Therapist

RD – Registered Dietitian

RN – Registered Nurse

A Registered Nurse must have, at minimum, a two-year or three-year diploma and many have baccalaureate degrees. They typically supervise the LPN and CNA teams.

SLP – Speech Language Pathologist

SNF – Skilled Nursing Facility (sometimes read as “sniff”)

A skilled nursing facility provides care for individuals who require intense, around-the-clock medical care. Patient care is provided by skilled nurses, doctors, and/or therapists.

ST – Speech Therapy or Speech Therapist

UAI – Uniform Assessment Instrument

This is a tool used by a certified individual to assess candidates for admission into an Assisted or Independent Living community. All residents are required to have a UAI completed prior to admission. The UAI can also be completed by a physician.

Veterans Aid and Attendance – A benefit paid by Veterans Affairs to wartime veterans, spouses, or surviving spouses who required financial assistance to pay for in-home care, assisted living care, or nursing home care.

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