

**caring**  
*for those  
you care about*

# Glossary of Eldercare Terms

## **Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)**

Basic functional tasks of everyday life that include walking, dressing, bathing, eating, personal grooming, 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.

## **Advance Directives**

A variety of documents that express health care wishes, to include a Living Will, Health Care Power of Attorney or proxy, Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Decisions, Medical Directive or other similar name.

## **Area Agency on Aging (AAA or Triple A)**

A nonprofit agency designated by the state with the responsibility for planning and coordinating services for older persons within a specific geographical area (city, county, or multi-county district).

## **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.

## **Board and Care Homes**

Housing that provides meals, and help with some ADLs. In some states board and care homes can provide some nursing services, but they are not medical residences.

## **Caregiver**

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

## **Companionship Services**

A variety of services including home supervision, telephone reassurance, and friendly visitors.

## **Congregate Housing/Senior Retirement Communities**

Also called senior apartments or senior retirement apartments. Residents live independently in their own units, but they share some meals in a central dining room and receive housekeeping services.

## **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**

Housing that offers a variety of living options and services, often all on the same campus, designed to meet changing needs.

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A common scenario involves a resident who starts out living independently, moves to an assisted living unit when he or she needs help with daily activities, and stays every now and then in the nursing unit when he or she needs skilled nursing care.

## **Custodial Care**

Help and supervision with ADLs, e.g., dressing, eating, and personal care, but not medical services.

## **Dementia**

Deterioration of cognitive ability usually characterized by memory loss, personality change, and impaired judgment.

Common causes include Alzheimer's disease and stroke.

## **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.

## **Durable Power of Attorney for Finances (DPA for Finances)**

A document in which you appoint another person to make financial decisions on your behalf. The DPA either continues in effect once you become unable to manage your affairs or springs into effect at that time.

## **Elder Law Attorney**

An attorney who specializes in the laws pertaining to the rights and issues of older adults, such as estate planning, wills, health care decision-making, and financial issues.

## **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 by the court to be no longer capable of making decisions for him/herself.

## **Health Care Power of Attorney (Health Care Proxy)**

A special kind of durable power of attorney called a Health Care Power of Attorney (HCPA) in which you appoint another person to make health care decisions should you become unable to do so.

## **Home and Community-Based Services**

Long-term care services provided in the home or in community settings, such as home delivered meals, chores and personal care, home health care, and adult day centers.

## **Home-Delivered Meals (Meals on Wheels)**

Regular delivery of nutritious meals to homebound individuals and persons unable to prepare food for themselves due to disability or illness.

## **Home Health Agency**

Provides health-related services in the home such as nursing, occupational, speech, or physical therapy, social work, and/or personal care. This service is usually for patients recovering from an acute illness or chronic debilitating conditions.

### **Home Health Aide**

An individual who helps with bathing, dressing, grooming, assistance with meals, and light housekeeping.

### **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 the terminally ill and their families. The care is provided at home and in other settings.

### **Living Will (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 Insurance**

Policies that pay for care in nursing homes, assisted living residences, homes, and community settings, depending on the policy.

### **Long-Term Care Ombudsman**

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

### **Medicare**

The national health insurance program for people age 65 and older, and for some younger persons with disabilities. Part A helps pay for care in a hospital or nursing home, limited home health services, and hospice care. Medicare Part B helps pay

for doctors' services, outpatient hospital care, medication administered as an outpatient, and other medical services.

### **Medicaid**

The federal health care insurance program for low-income people. It is administered by the states, so eligibility and coverage differ from state to state.

### **Nursing Homes**

A nursing facility that provides intermediate care — assistance with personal care and activities of daily living and/or skilled care — 24-hour medical, nursing, and rehab care.

### **Palliative Care**

Professionally coordinated services that focus on physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs of those with life-threatening illness and their families. It seeks to maintain highest level of comfort.

### **Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)**

An electronic device used to call for help in an emergency, helpful for older adults living alone.

### **Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program (QMB)**

A state assistance program for Medicare beneficiaries who have limited income and assets. It pays for Medicare Part A premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance for eligible people.

### **Respite Care**

A service that provides temporary relief for persons caring for someone who is ill, injured, or frail. Services can be provided in an adult day care center, the home of the person being cared for, or other settings.

## **Senior Centers**

Neighborhood or community centers that offer a variety of activities designed for independent older adults, including recreational programs, social activities, health screening, and meals.

## **Senior Retirement Community**

(See Congregate Housing/Senior Retirement Communities)

## **Social Security**

A social insurance program that provides monthly benefits to eligible workers (i.e., with the required number of quarters of work in Social Security covered-work) who are either disabled or age 62 or over, as well as certain family members.

## **Specified Low Income Medicare Beneficiary Program (SLMB)**

A state assistance program for Medicare beneficiaries who have limited income and assets. Medicare pays the premium for Part B if you meet income eligibility requirements.

## **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**

SSI provides a monthly benefit to people who are 65 years of age and older, disabled or blind, and who have limited income and resources.

## **Will**

A legal document that communicates how a person wishes his/her belongings, assets, and property to pass on after death.

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601 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20049  
[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)