



Glossary of Terms Patient Advocate Certification Exam

(Updated February 1, 2018)

This glossary is a compilation of terms directly or indirectly related to the practice of patient advocacy. The list is not meant to be all inclusive and more may be added over time. Professional patient advocates are encouraged to be familiar with terms and concepts relevant to the practice of patient advocacy and the delivery of patient assistance.

Active Listening: Active listening is fully concentrating on what is being said rather than just passively 'hearing' the message of the speaker. Active listening involves listening with all senses. As well as giving full attention to the speaker, it is important that the 'active listener' is also 'seen' to be listening - otherwise the speaker may conclude that what they are talking about is uninteresting to the listener.

ADA: The Americans with Disability Act. The Act was passed in 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life.

Advance Directives: legally executed documents that detail an individual's healthcare-related wishes and decisions for end-of-life. They are drawn up while the patient is competent and are used to understand the person's wishes. They are also used if the person becomes incapacitated or incompetent to understand their wishes.

Adverse Events: Any untoward occurrence, which under most conditions are not natural consequences of the patient's disease process or treatment outcome.



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Avoidance of Impropriety: when someone outside a situation raises ethical questions without benefit of knowledge of the situation

Autonomy: a form of personal liberty in which a person holds the right and freedom to select and initiate his or her own treatment and course of action. The person takes control of his or her health. This fosters the person's independence and self-determination.

Beneficence: the obligation and duty to promote good, to further and support a person's legitimate interest and decisions, and to actively prevent or remove harm.

Biomedical Ethics: is the application of ethics to the field of medicine and healthcare.

Burden of Proof: The duty of producing evidence as the case progresses, and/or the duty to establish the truth of the claim by a preponderance of the evidence.

Care Coordination involves deliberately organizing patient care activities and sharing information among the participants concerned with a patient's care to achieve safer and more effective care. This means that the patient's needs and preferences are known ahead of time and communicated at the right time to the right people, and that this information is used to provide safe, appropriate, and effective care to the patient.

Clinical Pathway (Care Map or Critical Pathway) A timeline of patient care activities and expected outcomes of care. Addresses the plan of care of each medical discipline involved in the care of a specific patient. It is usually developed prospectively by an interdisciplinary healthcare team in relation to a patient's diagnosis, health problems, or surgical procedure.

Care Plan or Plan of Care: Based on an individual's unique needs and problems, a care plan is the outline and basis guiding the appropriate interventions; timelines and goals and expected outcomes.

Client Expectations refer to the anticipation or the belief about what is to be encountered in a consultation or in the healthcare system. It is the mental picture that patients or the public will have of the process of interaction with the system.

Compassionate Care is medical and emotional care for patients with terminal diseases to make their lives more comfortable when treatment proves futile. It is



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also referred to as hospice care and generally takes place in a patient's home. Compassionate care provides private medical treatment as well as emotional support to help patients cope with the final stages of life.

Competence: The mental ability and capacity to make decisions, accomplish actions, and perform tasks that another person of similar background and training, or any human being, would be reasonably expected to perform adequately.

Competencies is the process of being competent in a practice. Being competent requires the professional to possess the required skill, knowledge, qualification, to perform a task.

Confidentiality: is the right of an individual to have personal, identifiable **medical** information kept private.

Conflict of interest: a situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person's self-interest and professional interest or public interest.

Contract; a written or spoken agreement between to people concerning employment, sales, or tenancy that is intended to be enforceable by law.

Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services the ability of to understand and integrate how the patients culture factors into the delivery of care in a language the patient can understand and speak

Designated Healthcare Surrogate: a health care surrogate is an adult who is appointed to make healthcare decisions for a person when the person is unable to make them for themselves.

Diagnostic tests approaches used to gather clinical information for the purpose of making a clinical decision.

Disability: a physical or neurological deviation in an individual makeup. It may refer to a physical, mental or sensory condition. A disability may or may not be a handicap to an individual, depending on one's adjustment to it.

Disclosure the action of making information known.



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Discriminatory Practices: discriminating against an individual's age, color, culture, disability, ethnic, gender, medical condition, nationality, appearance, race, religion, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or social class.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) is a request not to have cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) performed if the heart stops, breathing ceases or there is no brain activity.

Durable Power of Attorney a durable power of attorney (POA) enables a person to appoint an "agent," such as a trusted relative, friend or attorney to handle specific health, legal and financial responsibilities. There are two types of power of attorney. Power of Attorney for healthcare: Gives a designated person the authority to make health care decisions on behalf of the person. Power of Attorney for finances giving a designated person the authority to make legal/financial decisions on behalf of the person.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Empowerment authority or power given to someone to do something.

End of Life Care the term used to describe the support and medical care given during the time surrounding death.

Ethical Standards: a set of standards that promote values such as trust, good behavior, fairness, and/or kindness.

Equal access to health services: a health care system that is focused on ensuring that all have access to quality care when and where they need it, regardless of race and ethnicity.

Equity: the quality of being fair and impartial. Focus on fairness and impartiality for all.

Fee for Service is a payment model where services are unbundled and paid for separately.

Fee Schedule a listing of fees used by Medicare or commercial payers to reimburse physicians and other providers/suppliers.

Guarantor: a person, organization, or thing that guarantees something, usually payment.



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Handicap: The functional disadvantage and limitation of potential due to a physical or mental impairment or disability. It substantially limits or prevents the fulfillment of one or more major life activities otherwise considered normal for that individual based on age, sex, and social and cultural factors, such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, etc. Handicap is a classification of role reduction resulting from circumstances that place an impaired or disabled persons sat a disadvantage compared to others.

Habitation: The process by which a person with developmental disabilities is assisted in acquiring and maintaining life skills to: cope more effectively with personal and developmental demands and to increase the level of physical, mental, vocational and social ability through services. Persons with developmental disabilities include anyone whose development has been delayed, interrupted or stopped/fixed by injury or disease after an initial period of normal development as well as those with congenital conditions.

Health and Human Services Risk Management: The science of the identification, evaluation, and treatment of financial and clinical loss. A program that attempts to provide positive avoidance of negative results.

Healthcare Access refers to the ease with which an individual can obtain needed medical services.

Healthcare Proxy: a legal document that directs the healthcare provider/agency in who to contact for approval/consent of treatment decisions or options whenever the patient is no longer deemed competent to decide for self.

Healthcare System is the organization of people, institutions, and resources that deliver health care services to meet the health needs of target populations.

Healthcare Team: those who provide and receive care in the healthcare system.

HIPAA the acronym that stands for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Developed by the Department of Health and Human Services, These standards provide patients with access to their medical records and more control over how their personal health information is used and disclosed. They represent a uniform, federal floor of privacy protections for consumers across the country. State laws providing additional protections to consumers are not affected by this new rule. HIPAA took effect on April 14, 2003.



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Hospital Acquired Infection: A hospital-acquired infection (HAI), also known as a nosocomial infection, is an infection that is acquired in a hospital or other health care facility.

Independent Patient Advocate: Advocates work directly for a client and are contracted by the client or by a guarantor (family, lawyer, etc.) on behalf of that client. A professional patient advocacy relationship in this category exists when there is a service agreement or contract that defines the responsibility of each party.

Informed Consent: consent given by a patient, next of kin, legal guardian, or designated person for an intervention, treatment or service after the provision of sufficient information by the provider. A decision based on knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages and implications of choosing a particular course of action.

Informed Decision Making is a decision by a patient about a diagnostic or therapeutic procedure based on choice, which requires the decision to be voluntary by the person who had the capacity to understand information and make decisions on a set of values and goals.

Impairment: a general term indicating injury, deficiency or lessening of function. Impairment is a condition that is medically determined and relates to the loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function. Impairments are disturbances at the level of the organ and include defect or loss of limb, organ or other body structures or mental function.

Institutional Patient Advocate: Institutional advocates are hired by an institution, organization, corporation (hospital, managed care company, cancer center, employer, social service agency, labor union, etc. The institutional advocate works with the clients in a variety of services based on their scope of services and their organization culture.

Insurance Risk Management: a comprehensive program of activities to identify, evaluate, and take corrective action against risks; these risks may lead to patient or staff injury with resulting financial loss or legal liability. The program aims at minimizing risk.

Integrity: adherence to moral and ethical principles; soundness of moral character; honesty.



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Interpersonal Relationships: Interpersonal relationships are social associations, connections, or affiliations between two or more people.

Justice: maintaining what is right and fair and making decisions that are good for a person.

Liability: legal responsibility for failure to act appropriately or for action that do not meet the standard of care, inflicting harm on another person.

Lifelong Learning: Patient advocates are committed to lifelong learning to keep their knowledge and skills current, hone their professional expertise, and keep abreast of current conditions in the rapidly changing healthcare environment.

Living Will a legal document that directs the healthcare team/provider in holding or withdrawing life support measures. A living will is usually prepared by the person while he/she is competent indicating his/her wishes.

Mediation as used in law, is a form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR), a way of resolving disputes between two or more parties with concrete effects. Typically, a third party, the mediator, assists the parties to negotiate a settlement.

Medical Error: A medical error is an adverse effect of care, whether or not it is evident or harmful to the patient. Examples include an inaccurate or incomplete diagnosis or treatment of a disease, injury, syndrome, behavior, infection or other ailment.

Medical Malpractice: occurs when a hospital, doctor or other health care professional, through a negligent act or omission, causes an injury to a patient. The negligence might be the result of errors in diagnosis, treatment, and aftercare or health management.

Medical Durable Power of Attorney: a legal document that names a surrogate decision maker in the event the patient is unable to make his or her own healthcare decisions.

Negligence: Failure to act as a reasonable person. Behavior is contrary to that of any ordinary person facing similar circumstance.

Non-judgmental: Avoidance of judgment.



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Patient Abandonment: terminating the relationship with the patient without giving responsible notice or providing a competent replacement, resulting in a lack of necessary medical care.

Patient Advocate: a patient advocate is a professional who provides services to patients and those supporting them who are navigating the complex healthcare continuum. Advocates work directly with clients (or with their legal representatives) to ensure they have a voice in their care and information to promote informed decision making. Advocates may work independently or in medical or other organizational settings. They serve individuals, communities, disease-specific populations, and family caregivers. Synonyms may include health advocate, healthcare advocate, healthcare advocacy consultant, healthcare consumer advocate, and other phrases that imply this role.

Patient Rights: Patients' Rights can be guaranteed by federal law, such as the right to get a copy of your medical records, and the right to keep them private. Many states have additional laws protecting patients, and healthcare facilities often have a patient bill of rights. An important patient right is informed consent. This means that if you need a treatment, your health care provider must give you the information you need to make a decision.

Patient Safety Issues: Hospitals are charged with the dual task of keeping patients well while also keeping patients safe. The two are inextricably linked, as patient safety concerns often tie directly into patient health concerns — such as hand hygiene, transitions of care and medication errors among other things that can impact patient safety.

Practice Guidelines: Guidelines are systemically developed statements or medical practices that assist a practitioner in making decisions about appropriate diagnostic and therapeutic healthcare services for specific medical conditions. Practice guidelines are usually developed by authoritative professional societies and organizations.

Release: The relinquishment of a right, claim, or privilege by a person in who it exists or to whom it accrues, to the person against who it might have been demanded or enforced.

Resilience is adaptation in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or stress: family/relationship problems, health problems or workplace/money issues.



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Root Cause Analysis: a process used to identify the basic or causal factors that contribute to variation in performance and outcomes or that underlie the occurrence of a sentinel event.

Scope of Practice: describes the procedures, actions, and processes that a professional is permitted to undertake in keeping with the terms of their professional competencies and/or licenses.

Second opinion: obtaining an evaluation or medical opinion by another practitioner.

Self-Determination: the Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA) is a federal law, and compliance is mandatory. It is the purpose of this act to ensure that a patient's right to self-determination in health care decisions be communicated and protected. Through advance directives--the living will and the durable power of attorney--the right to accept or reject medical or surgical treatment is available to adults while competent, so that in the event that such adults become incompetent to make decisions, they would more easily continue to control decisions affecting their health care.

Stakeholders: Those persons involved in an action, or with an interest in an action.

Standard (individual): an authoritative statement by which a professional defines the responsibilities for which its practitioners are accountable.

Standard (Organization): an authoritative statement that defines the performance expectations, structures, or processes that must be substantially in place for an organization to enhance quality of care.

Standards of Care: statements that delineate the care expected to be provided to all clients. They include predefined outcomes of care clients can expect from providers and are accepted within the community of professionals, based upon the best scientific knowledge, current outcomes data, and clinical expertise.

Standards of Practice: statements of the acceptable level of performance, or expectations for professional intervention or behavior, associated with one's professional practice. They are generally formulated by practitioner organizations based upon clinical expertise and the most current research findings.



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Statute: an act of a legislature declaring, commanding, or prohibiting an action, in contrast to unwritten common law.

Statutory rights: an individual's legal rights provided by legislative action.

Transitions of Care: The movement of a patient from one setting of care (hospital, ambulatory primary care practice, ambulatory specialty care practice, long-term care, home health, rehabilitation facility) to another.

Transparency: refers to clear direction where all information is available and shared with client surrounding costs, treatment decisions and information needed for the patient to make an informed decision.

Well-being: good or satisfactory condition of existence; a state characterized by health, happiness, and prosperity; welfare: to influence the well-being of the nation and its people.

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