

Glossary of Health Care Providers

Short-term care

A person recovering from operation or a major illness who may require a high level of care initially. Level of care may decrease as person recovers. Example: A person with a broken leg will require more care at first but eventually this person should be able to function independently.

Long-term care

A person with permanently impaired physical or mental abilities. In most situations extensive care needs will have to be considered. Full-time care may be required and may involve adaptations being made to your home. Example: a downstairs bedroom may have to be converted into a bedroom for a stroke patient.

Social Worker

Assesses the needs of the caregiver and the person being cared for. Produces a care plan and guidance on how to obtain services. Coordinates and monitors the care that is provided.

Geriatrician

A physician with special training in the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disorders in the elderly.

Surgeon

A physician who treats health disorders by operating. Many surgeons specialize in one part of the body.

Nurse practitioner

Has advanced training and education. Provides general nursing care and may in some regions, diagnose minor complaints and prescribe medicine.

Registered nurse

Supports the work of the physicians, including doing a health assessment and advice on diet and lifestyle. Carries out clinical procedures such as wound dressings and injections.

Community psychiatric nurse/Community mental health nurse

Provides support and counseling for those with psychiatric problems; administers medication and monitors overall care and treatment given.

Occupational therapist

Assesses a person's individual requirements and advises on adapting the home, equipment and activities to enable him or her to relearn skills and be self-sufficient.

Physical therapist

Treats those with bone and joint problems. Advises on mobility and exercise.

Speech language-pathologist

Treats those with speech and language problems, including stroke victims.

Registered dietician

Advises on nutrition and healthy diets; tailors special diets to suit specific medical conditions such as diabetes.

Oncological care nurse

Advises on pain and symptom control for cancer patients. Offers care, support, and counseling for patients and caregivers.