

Vocabulary Glossary

Themes 1-10

ACA (Affordable Care Act) (n)

- the comprehensive healthcare reform law passed in 2010 and its amendments; also known as the “Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act” or “Obamacare”

accountable (adj)

- required or expected to justify actions or decisions; responsible

actionable (adj)

- able to be done or acted on; having practical value

addiction (n)

- a chronic disorder characterized by the repeated involvement with a substance or activity, despite the substantial harm it causes

ADLs (activities of daily living) (n)

- the basic actions that involve caring for one's self and body, including personal care, mobility, and eating

advance directive (n)

- a written statement of a person's wishes regarding medical treatment that legally ensures their wishes will be carried out if they are unable to communicate them

adverse (adj)

- harmful; unfavorable

advocate (v)

related: advocate (n)

- to speak on behalf of another person or group

alleles (n)

- the genetic sequence on a chromosome represented with two letters, one from each parent

allergies (n)

- a damaging immune response by the body to a substance to which it has become hypersensitive

annual (adj)

- occurring once every year

antibiotic (n)

related: antibiotic (adj)

- a medicine that destroys or slows down the growth of microorganisms

antibody (n)

- a protein produced in the blood that attacks and kills harmful foreign substances (antigens)

antigen (n)

- any substance that activates the immune system to produce antibodies against it

aorta (n)

- the largest artery, which leads from the lower left chamber of the heart to arteries all over the body; part of the cardiovascular system

arteries (n)

- the largest blood vessels that carry blood away from the heart; part of the cardiovascular system

authorization (n)

related: authorize (v)

- official permission or approval

autonomy (n)

- the right of competent adults to make informed decisions about their own medical care; one of four key principles of medical ethics

BA (business associate) (n)

- any non-covered entity that has access to PHI (attorneys, CPA firms, independent medical transcriptionists, etc.)

bacteria (n)

- a large group of single-celled microorganisms that cause infections and disease

balance (n)

- an even distribution of weight enabling someone/something to remain upright and steady

balance billing or surprise billing (n)

- when an out-of-network provider charges a patient for the remaining balance of costs not covered by insurance (different than deductibles, coinsurance, or copays)

beneficence (n)

- the principle of doing good or acting in the best interest of the patient; one of four key principles of medical ethics

BHP (Basic Health Program) (n)

- a public health insurance program enacted by the ACA that gives states the option to provide coverage to low-income residents who do not qualify for Medicaid, CHIP, or other minimum essential coverage

bias (n)

- an unfair prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group

bicep (n)

- a large, thick muscle on the front part of the upper arm

blood pressure (n)

- the force of circulating blood on the walls of the arteries

blood type (n)

- a classification of blood based on the presence and absence of antibodies and inherited antigenic substances

bone marrow (n)

- the soft, sponge-like material inside bones

calorie (n)

- a unit of energy, often used to express the nutritional value of foods

capillaries (n)

- tiny blood vessels that transport blood, nutrients, and oxygen to cells; part of the cardiovascular system

carbohydrate (n)

- food consisting of sugar, starch, cellulose, or similar substances that can be broken down to release energy in the human body

cardiovascular or circulatory system (n)

- a network of organs that works together to supply oxygen and nutrients to the entire body

career cluster (n)

- a group of occupations with similar features that require similar knowledge or skill sets

cartilage (n)

- a flexible, fibrous connective tissue on the nose, ears, and at the ends of bones

catastrophic health plan (n)

- a qualified health plan offered through the Health Insurance Marketplace with low premiums but very high deductibles, covering essential health benefits, preventive care, and emergencies; only available for people under 30 or those 30 or older with a hardship or affordability exemption

CE (covered entity) (n)

- any healthcare provider, health plan, or healthcare clearinghouse that uses PHI

CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) (n)

- a public health insurance program that provides low-cost healthcare coverage to children (and in some states, pregnant women) in families who earn too much income to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to purchase private insurance

cholesterol (n)

- a fatty substance made in the liver and found in the bloodstream

chronic (adj)

- persisting for a long time or constantly recurring

claim (n)

- a request for payment that a patient or healthcare provider submits to the patient's health insurer when the patient receives items/services they think are covered

CLAS (culturally and linguistically appropriate services) (n)

- services that are respectful of and responsive to the cultural beliefs, practices, and needs of diverse patients

classification (n)

- the action or process of categorizing something according to shared qualities or characteristics

COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) (n)

- a federal law that may allow someone temporary continuation of health coverage after their employment ends

coinsurance (n)

- the percentage of healthcare costs a patient pays after meeting their deductible

colon (n)

- the longest part of the large intestine that is connected to the small intestine at one end and the anus at the other; part of the digestive system

compliance (n)

related: comply (v)

- obeying a set of rules, such as a policy or law

confidentiality (n)

related: confidential (adj)

- a patient's right to have their information kept secret

contraception (n)

- the deliberate use of artificial methods or other techniques to prevent pregnancy as a consequence of sexual intercourse

convert (v)

- to change a quantity's numerical value as a result of using a different unit of measurement

copay or copayment (n)

- a fixed amount a patient pays every time they use a medical service

coping skill (n)

- a strategy to help someone deal with difficult situations and lessen unpleasant emotions,

thoughts, or behaviors

coronary artery disease (heart disease) (n)

- a disease that involves the reduction of blood flow to the heart muscle due to a build-up of plaque in the arteries of the heart

cost sharing (n)

- the share of costs covered by your insurance that you pay out of your own pocket, such as deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments

CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) (n)

- an emergency procedure used to restart a person's heartbeat and breathing after one or both have stopped

crisis (n)

- a time of intense difficulty, instability, and/or danger

cultural competency (n)

- gaining the awareness, knowledge, and skills to work and communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations

cultural humility (n)

- understanding one's biases and privileges, managing power imbalances, and remaining open to others' identities and beliefs

data breach (n)

related: breach (v)

- a security violation in which unauthorized users gain access to confidential, protected information

deductible (n)

- a fixed amount (usually per year) that an insured person pays before their insurance covers medical services

dental coverage (n)

- a health benefit that helps cover the costs of basic or preventive dental care (teeth cleaning, X-rays, fillings), provided under a health plan or purchased separately; required under the ACA for children 18 or younger

dental hygienist (n)

- a dental worker specializing in scaling and polishing teeth and giving advice on teeth cleaning

detection (n)

- the action or process of identifying the presence of something concealed

digestive system (n)

- a network of organs that help you digest and absorb nutrition from your food

dilemma (n)

- a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two or more alternatives, especially equally undesirable ones

disparity (n)

- a difference in level or treatment, especially one that is seen as unfair

DNR (do-not-resuscitate) order (n)

- a type of advance directive stating that a patient does not want CPR if they go into cardiac arrest or stop breathing

dominant (adj)

- most important, powerful, or influential

dominant allele (n)

- an allele that overrides another, ultimately determining the expression of a trait (example: Bb or BB = brown eyes)

dosage (n)

- the size or frequency of a dose of a medicine or drug

DSM or DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) (n)

- a reference guide published by the American Psychiatric Association that clinicians use to diagnose, classify, and identify mental health conditions

effectiveness (n)

related: effective (adj)

- the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result; success

EHRs (electronic health records) or EMRs (electronic medical records) (n)

- electronic versions of a patient's medical records, owned and stored by a healthcare provider

encryption (n)

related: encrypt (v)

- the process of encoding information, especially to keep it secure

endemic disease (n)

- an infectious disease that is consistently present in a specific population or region

endurance (n)

- the ability to exert oneself and remain active for a long period of time

EOB (Explanation of Benefits) (n)

- a written statement from an insurance company summarizing the health services a patient received, showing covered expenses and the amount the patient owes (not a bill)

epidemic (n)

- the widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time

EPO (Exclusive Provider Organization) (n)

- a health insurance plan in which services are covered only through in-network providers (except in emergencies); networks are generally larger than those for HMOs and specialist care may not require a PCP referral

esophagus (n)

- the tube that carries food to the stomach; part of the digestive system

ethics (n)

related: ethical (adj)

- the character of an individual, the right or wrong conduct of an individual in a particular situation

exercise (n)

- activity requiring physical effort, carried out to sustain or improve health and fitness

expiration (n)

- the ending of a fixed period

exponent (n)

- a number or symbol that shows how many times a number should be multiplied by itself

exponential growth (n)

- a pattern of data that shows greater increases with passing time, creating an upwards curve

fiber (n)

- a type of carbohydrate that the body can't digest

flexibility (n)

- the ability of a joint(s) to maintain the movement necessary for physical activity

fructose (n)

- a simple sugar found naturally in plants like honey, beets, and vegetables

FSA (Flexible Spending Account) or flexible spending arrangement (n)

- an employer-sponsored savings account that lets employees set aside pre-tax income to use for certain out-of-pocket medical or dependent care costs

gallbladder (n)

- a small, hollow organ where bile is stored before it is released into the small intestine; part of the digestive system

generic (n)

related: generic (adj)

- a consumer product having no brand name or registered trademark

genotype (n)

- the genetic makeup of an organism described by the set of genes present

GHP (group health plan) or group coverage (n)

- a health insurance plan offered by an employer or employee organization that provides health coverage to current employees and their families

HDHP (High Deductible Health Plan) (n)

- a health insurance plan with lower premiums and higher deductibles than a traditional plan; often combined with an HSA

health center (n)

- a community-based clinic that receives federal grant funding through the HRSA (Health Resources & Services Administration) and provides comprehensive primary and preventive care to everyone, regardless of a person's ability to pay

Health Insurance Marketplace, Marketplace, or exchange (n)

- a service operated by the federal government through HealthCare.gov that helps people shop for and enroll in health insurance; some states run their own Marketplaces

health plan categories, metal levels, or metal tiers (n)

- a ranking system that indicates the percentage of healthcare costs covered by an insurance provider; on average, bronze plans cover 60%, silver plans cover 70%, gold plans cover 80%, and platinum plans (rare in the individual market) cover 90%

healthcare or health care (n)

related: healthcare (adj)

- the prevention, treatment, and management of illness and injuries, especially by trained and licensed professionals

healthcare proxy or durable power of attorney for healthcare (n)

- a type of advance directive in which a patient appoints an agent to make healthcare decisions on their behalf

heart (n)

- a hollow, muscular organ in the chest that pumps blood throughout the body; part of the cardiovascular system

heart attack (n)

- a medical emergency that occurs when a blood clot blocks blood flow to the heart

heart rate (n)

- the frequency of the heartbeat, measured by the number of contractions per minute

heterozygous (adj)

- having two different alleles of a gene(s)

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) (n)

- a federal law that requires the creation of national standards to protect sensitive patient health information from being disclosed

HMO (Health Maintenance Organization) (n)

- a health insurance plan that usually limits coverage to in-network providers (except in emergencies), with patient care managed through a PCP

homozygous (adj)

- having two identical alleles of a particular gene(s)

hospice (n)

- a healthcare facility that provides palliative care for terminally ill patients

HSA (Health Savings Account) (n)

- an untaxed savings account that a person can use to pay qualified medical expenses; requires HDHP coverage

hypertension (high blood pressure) (n)

- a condition in which the blood vessels have persistently raised pressure

immune system (n)

- a complex network of organs, cells, and proteins that defends the body against infection

immunization (n)

- the action of making a person or animal resistant to a particular infectious disease or pathogen, typically by vaccination

in network (n)

related: in-network (adj)

- healthcare providers that accept a negotiated rate with a patient's insurance, typically lowering their out-of-pocket costs

inactive ingredient (n)

- any component of a drug product other than the active ingredient

infectious disease (n)

- an illness caused by germs that enter the body, multiply, and create an infection that can be transmitted from one person to another

informed consent (n)

- a principle in medical ethics and law that a patient must have sufficient information and understanding before making decisions about their medical care

inpatient (n)

related: inpatient (adj)

- a patient who stays in a healthcare facility during medical treatment, receiving food and lodging as well as care

inpatient acute care (n)

- the most structured and intensive level of psychiatric care, designed for individuals needing emergency treatment who are at risk of harming themselves or others; usually short-term, no more than 30 days

inpatient residential treatment (n)

- an intensive psychiatric treatment program that focuses on a holistic approach to healing, providing comprehensive care and extended recovery time in a home-like setting; long-term, 30-90+ days

intervention (n)

- the act of coming between so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events

IOP (intensive outpatient program) or IOT (intensive outpatient treatment) program (n)

- a structured psychological treatment program for mental health disorders and SUDs, involving more comprehensive care than traditional outpatient therapy

joint (n)

- a place where two or more bones come together

justice (n)

- the principle of doing what is fair and equitable; one of four key principles of medical ethics

ligament (n)

- a connective tissue that joins bones to other bones

liver (n)

- an organ that produces bile, stores sugar, and produces blood-clotting proteins; part of the digestive and lymphatic systems

living will (n)

- a type of advance directive that addresses end-of-life treatment

lymph (n)

- a clear fluid that flows through the lymphatic system, containing white blood cells in a liquid resembling blood plasma

lymph nodes or glands (n)

- hundreds of small structures that contain white blood cells and work as filters for foreign substances

lymphatic or lymph vessels (n)

- tube-like channels that carry lymph from tissues back into the bloodstream

lymphatic system (n)

- a network of tissues and organs that produce, store, and carry white blood cells that fight infections and other diseases; part of the immune system

managed care plan (n)

- a health insurance plan that has a contract with healthcare providers to provide care for members at reduced costs; the four main types are HMO, PPO, POS, and EPO

Medicaid (n)

- a public health insurance program that provides health coverage to low-income and/or disabled individuals, funded jointly by federal and state governments

Medicare (n)

- a public health insurance program that serves those over 65 years of age, people under 65 with certain disabilities, and people of all ages with end-stage renal disease

Medigap or Medicare Supplement Insurance (n)

- private insurance that helps cover expenses not covered by Medicare

mental health (n)

- a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being

mental health parity (n)

- the equal treatment of mental health conditions and substance use disorders in insurance plans (equal coverage, but not necessarily "good" coverage)

mental health screening or screener (n)

- a standard set of questions (often from the DSM-5) that a person answers to help a healthcare provider check for signs of a mental disorder

mental illness or mental disorder (n)

- a diagnosable condition that significantly affects a person's thinking, feeling, mood, and behavior

MHPAEA (Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act) or federal parity law (n)

- a 2008 law that requires insurance coverage for mental health conditions, including SUDs, to be no more restrictive than coverage for other medical conditions

misinterpret (v)

- to be mistaken, get the wrong idea, receive a false impression

morals (n)

related: moral (adj)

- the customs established by a group of individuals, concerned with the principles of right and wrong

muscle (n)

- a connective tissue that contracts to make movement possible

network (n)

- a group of doctors, hospitals, and specialists that provide care at predetermined rates

non-infectious or non-communicable disease (n)

- an illness that is not caused by pathogens, so it cannot spread from one person to another (such as cancer, diabetes, etc.)

non-maleficence (n)

- the principle of doing no harm; one of four key principles of medical ethics

nutrient (n)

- a substance that provides nourishment essential for growth and maintenance of life

obstacle (n)

- a thing that blocks one's way or prevents or hinders progress

OEP (open enrollment period) (n)

- an annual window of time (typically in the fall) when individuals can enroll in a health insurance plan or make changes to their existing coverage

osteoarthritis (n)

- inflammation of the bones and joints that occurs in older people

osteoporosis (n)

- a decrease in bone mass and density, with holes forming in bone tissue

out of network (n)

related: out-of-network (adj)

- healthcare providers who do not have a contract with a patient's insurance plan, typically increasing their out-of-pocket costs

out-of-pocket costs (n)

- any medical care expenses not reimbursed by insurance; this includes deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments for covered services and all costs for services that are not covered

outpatient (n)

related: outpatient (adj)

- a patient who visits a healthcare facility for diagnosis or treatment but does not stay overnight

outpatient therapy (n)

- the most common type of psychotherapy service, generally held in a therapist's office; available in many formats (individual, couples, family), with session frequency depending on patient needs and progress

palliative care (n)

- specialized medical care for people with a serious illness, focused on relieving symptoms and

pain

pancreas (n)

- a gland that produces digestive juices and the hormone insulin; part of the digestive system

pandemic (n)

- an epidemic of an infectious disease that has spread across a large region, such as multiple continents or worldwide, affecting a substantial number of individuals

pathogen (n)

- a microorganism that can cause disease

PCP (primary care physician) (n)

- a doctor that coordinates and provides a patient's general medical needs

pharynx (n)

- an organ behind the mouth that receives swallowed food and pushes it into the esophagus; part of the digestive system

phenotype (n)

- the set of observable characteristics of an individual resulting from its genotype

PHI (protected health information) (n)

- individually identifiable health information (medical histories, lab results, insurance information, etc.)

PHP (partial hospitalization program) (n)

- a structured psychological treatment program for mental health disorders and SUDs, involving more intensive and comprehensive care than IOPs and other outpatient services

PHR (personal health record) (n)

- a collection of health-related information compiled and maintained by the individual it pertains to

plasma (n)

- the liquid component of blood that helps your body recover from injury, distributes nutrients, removes waste, and prevents infection

platelets (thrombocytes) (n)

- tiny cells in the blood that help with clotting

POS (Point of Service or Point-of-Service) plan (n)

- a health insurance plan that is a hybrid of HMO and PPO plans; patients designate a PCP and pay less for in-network care, and out-of-network care is only covered with a PCP referral

power of attorney (n)

- the authority to act for another person in specified or all legal or financial matters

PPO (Preferred Provider Organization) (n)

- a health insurance plan that provides services through a network of participating providers;

patients can use providers both in and out of network, but out-of-network services come at a higher cost

pre-existing condition (n)

- a medical condition that a patient has already (such as cancer, asthma, or diabetes), before starting a new healthcare plan

premium (n)

- the amount a person pays for health insurance, usually a monthly or yearly cost

prenatal (adj)

- before birth; during or relating to pregnancy

preventive / preventative (adj)

- designed to keep something undesirable such as illness, harm, or accidents from occurring

preventive services or preventive care (n)

- routine healthcare that includes screenings, check-ups, and patient counseling to prevent illnesses, disease, or other health problems

privacy (n)

- a patient's right to have control over their personal information and be free from being observed by others not involved in their care

provider (n)

- an individual or facility that provides healthcare services

psychotherapy or talk therapy (n)

- when a person speaks with a trained therapist in a safe, confidential environment to explore and understand feelings and behaviors and gain coping skills

PTC (premium tax credit) (n)

- a refundable credit that helps eligible individuals and families cover premiums for their health insurance purchased through the Health Insurance Marketplace

pulmonary circulation (n)

- the passage of blood from the heart to the lungs, then back to the heart

Punnett square (n)

- a chart that displays all possible genotypes in the offspring of two parents

QHP (qualified health plan) (n)

- an insurance plan that is certified by the Health Insurance Marketplace, provides essential health benefits, follows established limits on cost-sharing (deductibles, copayments, etc.), and meets other ACA requirements

quantify (v)

- to express or measure the quantity or number of something

recessive allele (n)

- an allele that tends to be masked by another, expressed only when the genotype is homozygous (example: bb = blue eyes)

rectum (n)

- the last several inches of the large intestine that delivers waste to the anus for elimination; part of the digestive system

red blood cells (erythrocytes) (n)

- cells in the blood that contain a protein called hemoglobin, which carries oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the body

reduction (n)

- the action or fact of making a specified thing smaller or less in amount, degree, or size

referral (n)

- a written order from a PCP allowing a patient to see a specialist or receive certain medical services (required for many HMOs and all POS out-of-network care)

resistance (n)

- when microorganisms develop the ability to withstand the previously destructive effect of a drug

risk (n)

- a situation involving exposure to danger

saturated fat (n)

- a type of dietary fat that is unhealthy and in excess can lead to heart disease

screenings (n)

- the evaluation or investigation of something as part of a methodical survey

SDM (shared decision-making) (n)

- an emerging best practice in healthcare that involves clinicians and patients working together to make decisions about treatment

SEP (special enrollment period) (n)

- a time outside the yearly OEP when individuals can enroll in a health insurance plan due to specific qualifying life events (losing health coverage, moving, getting married, etc.)

serving size (n)

- the amount of food customarily consumed in one sitting for that food

severe (adj)

- intense or very bad

side effect (n)

- a secondary, typically undesirable effect of a drug or medical treatment

specialist (n)

- a doctor focusing on a specific area of medicine

spleen (n)

- an organ that produces white blood cells, filters the blood, stores blood cells, and destroys old blood cells; part of the lymphatic system

stigma (n)

- a set of negative and unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something

stomach (n)

- an organ that sends food from the esophagus to the small intestine; part of the digestive system

strength training (n)

- exercises designed to improve strength and endurance, such as lifting weights

stroke (n)

- a medical emergency that occurs when a blood vessel carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts

subsidized coverage (n)

related: subsidy (n)

- health coverage available at reduced or no cost for people with incomes below certain levels

SUD (substance use disorder) (n)

- a mental health condition involving uncontrolled use of a substance despite harmful consequences; addiction is the most severe form

suicide (n)

- the act of intentionally taking one's own life

systemic circulation (n)

- the passage of blood from the heart to the rest of the body, then back to the heart

task (n)

- work to be done or undertaken; a job or chore

telehealth or telemedicine (n)

- the use of electronic communication to provide healthcare at a distance

tendon (n)

- a connective tissue that joins muscle to bone

thymus (n)

- an organ that aids the immune system by stimulating the production of white blood cells; part of the lymphatic system

trauma (n)

related: traumatic (adj)

- a deeply distressing or disturbing experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope, or the lasting emotional response resulting from such an experience

triage (n)

- the process of quickly examining sick or injured people to prioritize patient care based on urgency

TRICARE (n)

- a federally-funded Department of Defense (DOD) health insurance program for active-duty and retired military members and their families

trigger or stressor (n)

related: trigger (v)

- an action or situation that can lead to an adverse emotional reaction, causing or worsening symptoms

VA Health Care (n)

- a federally-funded Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health insurance program for retired military members, implemented by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA)

vaccine (n)

- a biological substance used to stimulate immunity to a specific disease or pathogen

values (n)

- a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life

veins (n)

- blood vessels that carry blood from tissues of the body back to the heart; part of the cardiovascular system

venules (n)

- small veins; part of the cardiovascular system

violation (n)

related: violate (v)

- an action that breaks a law, agreement, or principle

virus (n)

- an infectious microorganism that can only multiply inside living cells

vision coverage (n)

- a health benefit that helps cover the costs of vision care (eye exams, glasses), provided under a health plan or purchased separately

wellness (n)

- the state of being in good health, especially as an actively pursued goal

white blood cells (lymphocytes) (n)

- cells found in the blood that help the body fight infection and disease

work conditions (n)

- the demands and environment of a job, including physical and psychological factors