

Human Services Acronym Decoder

Plain words for common terms on disability, insurance, medical, and support forms.

How to use: Find the letters, read the short meaning, and ask the agency or provider if you are unsure. The same letters can have different meanings on different forms.

Disability benefits and applications

LETTERS	FULL NAME	WHAT IT MEANS
SSA	Social Security Administration	The federal agency that handles Social Security benefits.
SSI	Supplemental Security Income	Monthly payments for eligible people with limited income and resources.
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance	Disability benefits based on qualifying work history.
DDS	Disability Determination Services	A state agency that helps Social Security review disability evidence.
CE	Consultative Examination	An exam Social Security may request while reviewing a claim.
CDR	Continuing Disability Review	A review of whether someone still meets disability rules.
SGA	Substantial Gainful Activity	An earnings/work measure Social Security uses in some disability decisions.
RFC	Residual Functional Capacity	An assessment of what work-related activities someone can still do.
DAC / CDB	Disabled Adult Child / Childhood Disability Benefits	Benefits that may be available on a parent's Social Security record.
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	Help buying food for people who qualify.

Insurance and paperwork

LETTERS	FULL NAME	WHAT IT MEANS
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services	The federal agency overseeing Medicare and Medicaid.
MCO	Managed Care Organization	A health plan that coordinates covered services for enrolled members.
PA	Prior Authorization	Approval a health plan may require before paying for a service.

LETTERS	FULL NAME	WHAT IT MEANS
EOB	Explanation of Benefits	A notice explaining how an insurance claim was processed; not usually a bill.
ROI	Release of Information	A form giving permission to share particular information.
PHI	Protected Health Information	Identifiable health information protected by applicable privacy rules.
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act	A federal law with health information privacy and security rules.
DME	Durable Medical Equipment	Reusable medical equipment such as walkers or wheelchairs.
HCBS	Home and Community-Based Services	Services that help eligible people receive support in community settings.

Health and assessments

LETTERS	FULL NAME	WHAT IT MEANS
PCP	Primary Care Provider	A main doctor or other primary-care clinician. Can mean something else in planning.
ADL	Activities of Daily Living	Everyday self-care tasks such as dressing, eating, and bathing.
IADL	Instrumental Activities of Daily Living	Tasks such as cooking, shopping, and managing appointments.
Dx	Diagnosis	The name a clinician gives to a health condition.
Hx	History	Information about past health concerns or treatment.
Tx	Treatment	Care recommended or given for a condition.
Sx	Symptoms	Problems or changes a person notices or experiences.
OT	Occupational Therapy	Therapy supporting everyday activities and participation.
PT	Physical Therapy	Therapy supporting movement, strength, and mobility.
SLP	Speech-Language Pathologist	A professional supporting communication and sometimes swallowing.
CBT	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy	A type of therapy focused on thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
PHQ-9	Patient Health Questionnaire-9	A nine-question screen often used for depressive symptoms.
GAD-7	Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7	A seven-question screen often used for anxiety symptoms.

LETTERS	FULL NAME	WHAT IT MEANS
PRN	As needed	A medicine or treatment used only under its specific instructions.
MAR	Medication Administration Record	A record of medication administration in settings that use one.

Support plans, services and roles

LETTERS	FULL NAME	WHAT IT MEANS
DSP	Direct Support Professional	A worker who helps someone with daily life and community participation.
CM	Case Manager	A person who helps coordinate services and follow-up.
IDD	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	A group of disabilities that can affect learning or everyday activities.
ISP	Individual Support Plan / Individual Service Plan	A plan describing a person's goals and supports; wording varies by program.
PCP	Person-Centered Planning	Planning led by what matters to the person; can also mean primary care provider.
IEP	Individualized Education Program	A plan for eligible students receiving special education.
FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment	A process for understanding what may be contributing to a behavior.
BSP	Behavior Support Plan	A plan that describes supports and responses tailored to a person.
APS	Adult Protective Services	A state or local program that receives reports of concerns about adult mistreatment.
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	A federal civil rights law protecting people with disabilities.

Remember: This is a vocabulary guide, not instructions for completing an application, giving medicine, or deciding eligibility. For benefit forms, check the instructions from Social Security or your insurer. For medication or safety questions, ask an authorized professional. Program terms may vary by state.