



**Ottawa Valley**  
ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

# UNPACKING HEALTH ACRONYMS

A Guide for Patient, Family,  
& Caregiver Volunteers



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# UNPACKING HEALTH ACRONYMS

## A GUIDE FOR PATIENT, FAMILY, & CAREGIVER VOLUNTEERS

When working with health care professionals and the Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team, volunteers often encounter new terms and acronyms. It has sometimes been referred to as Alphabet Soup and can feel like people are speaking a brand-new language. This can be distracting and take away from real discussion and contributions. This document will help you cut through some of the common jargon and acronyms you may encounter during your time volunteering with the Patient, Family, and Caregiver (PFaC) Network.

### ACRONYM

### WHAT IT STANDS FOR

### THE DETAILS

#### ALC

Alternate Level of Care

ALC is a term to describe when patients are in hospital, waiting to move to a more appropriate service or bed type. Hospitals track their number of ALC days (the number of days a patient is designated as ALC and waiting).

A high number of ALC days means there is a high number of days where patients aren't receiving the right type of care, by the right health care provider, at the right time.

#### ALS

Assisted Living Services

ALS is a community program that assists seniors with everyday activities such as washing/bathing, preventative skin care, dressing/undressing, toileting or incontinence care, and homemaking.

#### CHC

Community Health Centre

CHCs are non-profit organizations funded by the government. They provide comprehensive primary care services as well as health promotion and disease prevention programs. Connectwell Community Health Centre is a local example of a CHC.

#### CHN

Community Health Nurse

CHN includes Public Health Nursing (focused on health promotion and illness prevention) and Community Health care (focused on care at home or in community settings). Nurses in Community Health are often employed by local health unit.

**ACRONYM****WHAT IT STANDS FOR****THE DETAILS****CHRIS**

Client Health and Related Information System

CHRIS is a web-based health record system for the home and community care sector across Ontario.

**COP**

Community of Practice

A CoP is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

CoPs are often formed once a new project has launched and participants want to learn from each other.

**EMR**

Electronic Medical Record

An EMR is a digital replacement of a paper medical record. Healthcare workers log in to their respective systems to access and document information about a patient's health history, diagnoses, medications, tests, allergies, immunizations, and treatment plans.

**EMS**

Emergency Medical Services

EMS is also known as ambulance services or paramedic services, and are emergency services that provide urgent pre-hospital treatment.

**EPIC**

A Hospital Health Information System

Epic is a software used at some hospitals as the health information system to securely store and manage patients' health records electronically.

Currently, Renfrew Victoria Hospital, St. Francis Memorial Hospital, and Deep River and District Hospital, all use Epic.

**ER OR ED**

Emergency Department

Usually part of a hospital, an ED is a medical treatment facility specializing in emergency medicine and acute care of patients who come without an appointment, either by ambulance or on their own.

**FHT**

Family Health Team

A FHT is a primary health care organization that offers comprehensive care and works in a team that often includes family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers, dietitians, and other professionals.

ACRONYM	WHAT IT STANDS FOR	THE DETAILS
<b>FHO</b>	Family Health Organization	A FHO is group of family physicians who work together to offer better access to primary care services.
<b>FLS</b>	French Language Services	Services and programs that are provided in French.
<b>FNIMUI</b>	First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous	FNIMUI is used to refer to various Indigenous groups.
<b>GEM</b>	Geriatric Emergency Management	The GEM program provides specialized nursing services in Emergency Departments to older adults. The program offers targeted geriatric assessments and helps to identify specific interventions for older adults.
<b>HCCSS</b>	Home and Community Care Support Services	<p>Home and Community Care Support Services coordinates home care services and long-term care placement services, as well as facilitates referral and access to community services.</p> <p>It was formerly LHIN Home and Community Care (HCC) and Community Care Access Centres (CCAC).</p>
<b>IHP</b>	Integrated Health Professional	IHPs are also commonly known as Allied Health Providers. Examples of professionals include audiologists, dietitians, medical lab technologists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, respiratory therapists, and speech- language pathologists.
<b>I&amp;R</b>	Intake & Referral, Home and Community Care Support Services	<p>I&amp;R is a department of Home and Community Care Support Services that responds to patient and client inquiries and supports intake and referral functions.</p> <p>You can reach I &amp;R through the general phone number 310-2222.</p>

ACRONYM	WHAT IT STANDS FOR	THE DETAILS
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator	A way to measure performance over time for a specific objective. KPIs provide targets for teams to shoot for, milestones to gauge progress, and insights that help to inform better decisions.
<b>LTC</b>	Long-Term Care Homes	<p>LTC are residential homes that provide ongoing care to patients whose care needs cannot be met in the community.</p> <p>Residents may need this level of support due to advancing age, disability, or declining health.</p>
<b>LOS</b>	Length of Stay	<p>Length of stay (LOS) is a metric that measures the length of time.</p> <p>Depending on the focus and setting, it is used to measure such things as time from triage to discharge/admission for EDs, to the number of inpatient days for hospitals, to the length of a program or service.</p>
<b>MOH</b>	Ministry of Health	The Ministry of Health is the Government of Ontario ministry responsible for administering the health care system in Ontario.
<b>MOLTC</b>	Ministry of Long Term Care	The Ministry of Long-Term Care is the Government of Ontario ministry responsible for administering the long-term care system in Ontario.
<b>MHA / MHASU</b>	Mental Health, Addictions and Substance Use	MHASU refers to the services, programs and organizations that work in mental health, addiction, and substance use health.
<b>NP</b>	Nurse Practitioner	NPs are registered nurses who have additional education and nursing experience, which enables them to diagnose and treat illnesses, order, and interpret tests and prescribe medications.
<b>OAB</b>	Online Appointment Booking	OAB is web-based appointment booking for healthcare services. Common platforms include OCEAN and Veribook.

**ACRONYM****WHAT IT STANDS FOR****THE DETAILS****OCEAN**

Ocean eReferral System

The Ocean eReferral system is used by primary care providers across OVOHT to send electronic healthcare referrals.

Using Ocean’s secure, online eReferral directory, healthcare providers can search for specialists and patient programs, view wait times and locations, and create and submit a healthcare referral.

**OH  
OH-E**

Ontario Health and Ontario Health East

OH was created by the Ontario Governance to connect, coordinated and oversee the health care system.

Ontario Health East spans from Scarborough to Deep River to Hawkesbury and service nearly 3.7 million people across the region.

**OHT /  
OVOHT**

Ontario Health Team and Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team

Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) are groups of organizations that work together to plan and deliver health care. At maturity, OHTs will be clinically and fiscally accountable for delivering a full and coordinated continuum of care.

The Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team (OVOHT) is one of 54 OHTs in Ontario and covers most of Renfrew County (from the outskirts of Arnprior to Deep River), as well as South Algonquin.

**PHI**

Personal Health Information

PHI is any identifying health information about a person and relates to both physical and mental conditions, including family medical history.

The Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004 (PHIPA) is a provincial law that governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal health information within the health sector. The goal of the act is to keep personal health information confidential and secure, while allowing for the effective sharing of information.

**ACRONYM****WHAT IT STANDS FOR****THE DETAILS****PCP**Primary Care  
Provider

A PCP is a health professional that provides primary care services. Most PCPs are doctors, but nurse practitioners and physician assistants are also considered PCPs.

**PPE**Personal Protective  
Equipment

PPE is protective clothing, masks, gowns, gloves, eyewear or other garments or equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury or infection. The hazards addressed by protective equipment include physical, electrical, heat, chemicals, biohazards, and airborne particulate matter.

**PSW /  
PSS**Personal Support Worker  
or Personal Support  
Services

PSWs provide care to any person who requires personal assistance with activities of daily living. Many PSWs work in personal homes, long-term care homes, retirement homes, hospitals, and community care settings.

PSS provide help with daily personal care needs like bathing, dressing, meal preparation, toileting, and medication reminders.

**QIP /  
CQIP**Quality Improvement Plan  
or Collaborative Quality  
Improvement Plan

A QIP is a formal, documented set of commitments that a health care organization makes to its patients, clients, residents, staff, and community to improve quality through focused targets and actions.

Most health organizations must complete a QIP each year.

A cQIP is designed to support multiple partner organizations in an OHT to work together in developing and monitoring common quality improvement activities. This focuses on organizations working together as a system, where the QIP focuses on organization-specific issues.

**ACRONYM****WHAT IT STANDS FOR****THE DETAILS****RN****Registered  
Nurse**

A RN is a nurse who has graduated or successfully passed a nursing program from a recognized nursing school and met the requirements outlined by the province to obtain a nursing license. The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario (RNAO) is the professional association representing registered nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students in the province of Ontario.

**RPN****Registered Practical  
Nurse**

RPNs are college-taught professionals who use their skills and education to assist patients with general or straightforward health conditions. RPNs commonly work in hospitals, schools, clinics, and the community to provide safe and general care to people of all ages. While they study from the same source of knowledge as registered nurses, an RPN can obtain their diploma faster.

**TPA****Transfer Payment  
Agreement**

The TPA is the accountability agreement Ontario Health used to outline funding, strategic objectives, and key deliverables.