

GLOSSARY

ADL

Activities of Daily Living, such as dressing or feeding oneself. The basis of measuring the functional status of frail older people.

BBA

Balanced Budget Act of 1997. The BBA established a Medicare Rural Hospital Flexibility Program under which grants are available to states for designating hospitals as Critical Access Hospitals. The BBA also created incentives for managed care organizations to compete to enroll Medicare beneficiaries. Other federal laws that have had an impact on rural hospitals have included the Balanced Budget Refinement Act of 1989 (BBRA), which adjusted upward the payment levels to rural providers and expanded the length-of-stay requirements for CAHs. The Benefits Improvement and Protection Act of 2000 (BIPA) again adjusted the payment structure for rural providers, provided assistance to rural ambulance systems and liberalized the rules for paying rural telemedicine providers. (See the following URL: <http://www.nrharural.org/dc/summary.html> for a summary of BIPA's impact on rural areas.) (U.S.)

BSL

Bedside Learning. A term used in Japan to indicate an equivalent of on-the-job training for physicians. See the paper by Fumimaro Takaku and Eiji Kajii.

CAH

Critical Access Hospital, a provider classification under Medicare. CAHs are designated jointly by states and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (formerly the Health Care Financing Administration). They receive full cost-based reimbursement for services in return for limiting their size and the length of stay for acute care patients. See the papers by James Ahrens and Thomas Ricketts. (U.S.)

CCU

Community Clinical Units. These are part of the medical school program at the University of Washington in which students serve part of their third year at community sites. See the paper by John Coombs.

CHI

Citizens' Health Insurance (*Kokumin Kenko Hoken*), also sometimes referred to as National Health Insurance, covers the non-employed, including farmers, the self-employed, and pensioners (almost all of the elderly). Municipal governments are the insurers. (Japan)

DICOM

Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine. A standard for electronic transmission of medical information and display of radiographic information. See the papers by Hiroshi Natori and John Zauher.

EACH

Essential Access Community Hospital. These serve as referral hospitals for Rural Primary Care Hospitals (RPCH). See the paper by Thomas Ricketts. (U.S.)

Frontier Counties

Typically refers to a county with fewer than 7 people per square mile. (U.S.)

FQHC

Federally Qualified Health Centers. The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1989 designated as Federally Qualified Health Centers the centers that previously had received federal funding for health care for the homeless and those health centers qualified to serve as Community and Migrant Health Centers. The Federally Qualified Health Centers are eligible to receive Medicaid reimbursements. States now can request waivers to put their Federally Qualified Health Centers under managed care organizations, shifting from a cost-based reimbursement to a capitation and fee-for-service basis. (U.S.)

GMHI

In Japan, small firms and their employees contribute to the Government-Managed Health Insurance (*Seikan Kenpo*), which is a single insurance pool operated by the national government.

HPSA

Health Professional Shortage Areas. In 1997, for example, the federal government designated an area as a HPSA if it had fewer than 1,742 physicians. The number changes and no longer is a strict physician to population ratio. Designation as a HPSA entitles the area to certain governmental assistance. (U.S.)

IADL

Instrumental activities of daily living, such as shopping, preparing meals and money management.

ISDN

Integrated Services Digital Network. A new generation of fast telecommunications interconnections.

Kaigo Hoken

The public, mandatory Long-Term Care Insurance (LTCI) program in Japan implemented on April 1, 2000.

Locum Tenens

Temporary, part-time physician service. Organizing the dispatch of temporary, part-time physicians to relieve physicians in rural areas is an important issue. Examples of locum tenens include: in Japan a program of substitutes organized by a mother-ship prefectural hospital, and in the United States a for-profit group offering substitutes for a fee.

LOS

Length of Stay

LTC

Long-Term Care

MAA

Mutual Assistance Associations (*Kyousai Kumiai*) for public and quasi-public employees (and their dependents). (Japan)

MAF

Medical Assistance Facilities. Predecessors of Critical Access Hospitals. (U.S.)

MCO

Managed Care Organization. An organization that combines a health insurance system with direct care of patients. Originally known as “pre-paid medical care,” managed care sometimes is characterized by capitation where each enrollee pays a fixed fee for comprehensive medical care. Currently most MCOs have a mix of capitated and fee-for-service care usually provided by independent practitioners under contract with the MCO. The Health Insurance Association of America designates insurance plans as either indemnity or managed care. Indemnity plans allow the insured person to use any doctor. Choice is usually restricted in some form under managed care, which includes: Preferred Provider Organizations (PPOs), Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), and Point-Of-Service plans. (U.S.)

MCU

Multipoint Communications. Video telecommunications links in which a video bridge or structure allows several video sites to communicate in a single conference.

Medicaid

The U.S. health care assistance program that combines federal and state general revenue funding for low-income persons. Children receive certain benefits if they are from a low-income family. The elderly can receive nursing home assistance if they meet certain means tests.

Medicare

The U.S. program of social insurance for senior citizens and some disabled people. Medicare has Part A (covering hospitalization) and Part B (covering physician visits). Co-payments are required. Medicare does not cover long-term nursing home stays, but does provide short-term nursing home coverage for Medicare-eligible patients who have been discharged from a hospital and require time for rehabilitation. Premiums are paid by all workers.

Metropolitan Area (MA)

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget defines a metropolitan area as a core area with a large population and adjacent communities that interact socially and economically with the core. Metropolitan areas have either 50,000

population or meet the U.S. Census definition of urban with a total population of at least 100,000. Another category is Metropolitan Statistical Area, which may be one or more counties that have economic and social integration with a metropolitan core.

MUA

Medically Underserved Areas. See the paper by James Ahrens. (U.S.)

Muison

A doctor-less area without medical facilities, which has at least 50 people in a 4-kilometer radius of the central area and geographic features that prevent easy access to hospitals in other areas. (Japan)

Non-metropolitan

See Metropolitan Area above. Non-metropolitan is further delineated by whether the area is adjacent to a metropolitan area or not. The size of the largest town in the area also factors into the definition.

QOS

Quality of Service. A term used in telecommunications carrier contracts to define service conditions and specifications. See SLA (Service Legal Agreements) below.

RHC

Rural Health Clinics. Also, Certified Rural Health Clinics. Frequently called Federal Rural Health Clinics. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (formerly the Health Care Financing Administration) certifies and oversees Rural Health Clinics. Public Law 95-210 created the Rural Health Clinic program in 1977 to increase access to health care in medically underserved rural areas, in part by using nurse practitioners, physician assistants and certified nurse midwives. RHCs can be certified only in states that permit nurse practitioners, physician assistants or certified nurse midwives to provide primary health care. More information about the interpretive guidelines for Rural Health Clinics can be found at this URL: <http://www.hcfa.gov/pubforms/07%5Fsom/somap%5Fg.htm>.

RHFP

Rural Hospital Flexibility Program. Instituted under the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 to provide state grants for designating hospitals as Critical Access Hospitals. (See BBA, above). (U.S.)

RPCH

Rural Primary Care Hospital. These often are paired with a hospital capable of handling more complex procedures, such as an Essential Access Community Hospital. (See EACH.) See the paper by Thomas Ricketts. (U.S.)

SLA

Service Legal Agreements. Contracts with telecommunications carriers that describe Quality of Service terms, among other specifications. Such terms may cover such items as the percentage of time for uninterrupted circuit availability, percentage of error-free seconds while available, and notification of maintenance interruptions.

SMHI

Society-Managed Health Insurance (*Kumiai Hoken*) for employees of large organizations and their dependents. (Japan)

SNF

Skilled Nursing Facilities provide 24-hour medical care for people with serious illnesses or disabilities. These state-licensed operations are staffed by registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and certified nurse aides, with oversight by a physician. Medicare (Part A) reimbursement is available for those admitted to a Skilled Nursing Facility, if the person is admitted directly after hospitalization. The coverage under Medicare Part A is less than 100 days. Any stay beyond 100 days is to be paid privately or possibly under Medicaid. Not all nursing homes are Skilled Nursing Facilities, but a Skilled Nursing Facility can accept long-term care clients in need of medical and not just custodial care. (U.S.)

Store-and-Forward Technologies

A basic service in telemedicine is the store-and-forward capability of computers to store diagnostic images and forward these for review by other physicians at distant sites.

Tertiary Care Center/Tertiary Hospital

In Japan and the United States, these centers offer the most complex care. For example, burn centers and neonatal intensive care units would be at a tertiary care center/hospital.

Tracking Project

This U.S. government-funded program tracks the efforts of states that use grants intended to designate facilities as Critical Access Hospitals.