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Graduate Certificate in Senior Care Management and Policy

## Health Policy and Advocacy for Seniors

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### Health Policy and Advocacy for Seniors Glossary

**Advance Directives:** Legal documents that allow individuals to convey their decisions about end-of-life care ahead of time. These documents include living wills and durable power of attorney for healthcare.

**Ageism:** Prejudice or discrimination against individuals based on their age, especially towards older adults. Ageism can manifest in various forms, such as stereotypes, biases, and discriminatory practices.

**Alzheimer's Disease:** A progressive neurodegenerative disorder that affects memory, cognition, and behavior. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia in older adults.

**Assisted Living Facility:** Residential care setting that provides assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing, and medication management. Assisted living facilities offer a combination of housing, support services, and healthcare.

**Caregiver:** An individual who provides physical, emotional, or financial support to a family member or loved one who is unable to care for themselves. Caregivers play a crucial role in supporting older adults with chronic illnesses or disabilities.

**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS):** Federal agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services responsible for administering the Medicare and Medicaid programs. CMS sets standards for healthcare quality, efficiency, and safety.

**Chronic Disease:** A long-lasting medical condition that requires ongoing management and treatment. Common chronic diseases among older adults include diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and arthritis.

**Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC):** Residential community that offers a continuum of care services, including independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing care. CCRCs allow older adults to age in place as their care needs change.

**Dementia:** A group of symptoms associated with a decline in memory, cognitive function, and social abilities. Dementia is not a specific disease but a term used to describe a range of cognitive impairments, including Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia.

**Disability:** A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Disabilities can affect mobility, communication, cognition, and self-care abilities, making it challenging for individuals to perform daily tasks independently.

**Elder Abuse:** The intentional or negligent mistreatment of older adults, including physical, emotional, financial, or sexual abuse. Elder abuse can occur in various settings, such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and private homes.

**Elder Law:** Legal practice area that focuses on issues affecting older adults, including estate planning, guardianship, long-term care planning, and healthcare decision-making. Elder law attorneys help seniors navigate complex legal matters and protect their rights.

**End-of-Life Care:** Medical, emotional, and spiritual support provided to individuals with life-limiting illnesses or conditions. End-of-life care aims to improve quality of life, manage symptoms, and support patients and families through the dying process.

**Fall Prevention:** Strategies and interventions designed to reduce the risk of falls among older adults. Fall prevention measures may include home modifications, exercise programs, medication reviews, and vision screenings.

**Geriatric Care Management:** A holistic approach to coordinating and managing care for older adults with complex medical, social, and emotional needs. Geriatric care managers assess clients' needs, develop care plans, and coordinate services to optimize health and well-being.

**Health Equity:** The principle of ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their highest level of health. Health equity aims to address disparities in healthcare access, quality, and outcomes based on factors such as race, ethnicity, income, and geography.

**Home Health Care:** Healthcare services provided in the home setting to individuals who are unable to travel to a medical facility. Home health care may include skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and personal care services.

**Hospice Care:** End-of-life care provided to individuals with terminal illnesses or conditions. Hospice care focuses on managing pain, symptoms, and emotional distress while supporting patients and families through the dying process.

**Long-Term Care:** Healthcare and support services provided to individuals with chronic illnesses, disabilities, or cognitive impairments. Long-term care may include assistance with activities of daily living, medical care, and social services.

**Medicaid:** State and federally funded program that provides healthcare coverage to low-income individuals, including older adults with limited financial resources. Medicaid covers a wide range of medical services, including long-term care and home- and community-based services.

**Medicare:** Federal health insurance program for individuals aged 65 and older, as well as younger individuals with disabilities or certain medical conditions. Medicare consists of different parts that cover

hospital stays, medical services, prescription drugs, and preventive care.

**Nursing Home:** Residential facility that provides 24-hour skilled nursing care to individuals who require ongoing medical supervision and assistance with activities of daily living. Nursing homes may also offer rehabilitative services and long-term care.

**Palliative Care:** Specialized medical care focused on providing relief from symptoms and improving quality of life for individuals with serious illnesses. Palliative care can be provided at any stage of an illness and is not limited to end-of-life care.

**Policy Advocacy:** The process of influencing public policies, laws, and regulations to address issues affecting a particular population or community. Policy advocacy aims to raise awareness, promote change, and improve outcomes through legislative action.

**Quality Measures:** Standards and indicators used to assess the quality of healthcare services and outcomes. Quality measures may include patient satisfaction, clinical effectiveness, safety, efficiency, and accessibility of care.

**Respite Care:** Short-term care services provided to relieve family caregivers of their caregiving responsibilities temporarily. Respite care allows caregivers to take a break, attend to personal needs, or recharge while ensuring that their loved ones receive proper care.

**Social Determinants of Health:** Non-medical factors that influence individuals' health outcomes and well-being. Social determinants of health include socioeconomic status, education, housing, access to healthcare, and social support networks.

**Telehealth:** The use of technology, such as video conferencing and remote monitoring, to deliver healthcare services and information to patients at a distance. Telehealth enables older adults to access medical care, consultations, and support services from the comfort of their homes.

**Universal Design:** The design of products, environments, and services that are accessible and usable by people of all ages and abilities. Universal design principles aim to create inclusive and barrier-free environments that accommodate diverse needs and preferences.

**Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care:** Healthcare system provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to eligible military veterans and their families. VA health care services include medical treatment, mental health care, rehabilitation, and long-term care.

**Wellness Programs:** Health promotion initiatives that aim to improve individuals' overall well-being by addressing physical, emotional, and social aspects of health. Wellness programs may include fitness activities, nutrition education, stress management, and preventive screenings.

**Xerostomia:** Dry mouth condition characterized by decreased saliva production. Xerostomia is a common

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side effect of aging, medications, and certain medical conditions, leading to discomfort, oral health issues, and difficulty swallowing.

Yoga: Mind-body practice that combines physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation techniques to promote relaxation, flexibility, and mental clarity. Yoga has been shown to benefit older adults by improving strength, balance, and overall well-being.

Zoster Vaccine: Vaccine that protects against shingles, a painful viral infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus. The zoster vaccine is recommended for adults aged 50 and older to prevent shingles and its complications.

This glossary provides a comprehensive overview of key terms related to health policy and advocacy for seniors in the context of the Graduate Certificate in Senior Care Management and Policy. By understanding these terms, students can enhance their knowledge and skills in supporting the health and well-being of older adults through policy development, advocacy efforts, and quality care initiatives.