

Glossary of Terms

Chiropractic Doctor or Physician (DC) A doctor who uses a therapeutic system based primarily upon the interactions of the spine and nervous system, usually by adjusting the segments of the spinal column.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) A person who, after completing the basic education of a nurse, is licensed and practices as an RN, then is further trained in the administration of anesthetics.

Medical Assistant A person who is licensed and trained to work alongside physicians and nurses to assist in the care of individuals.

Medicine or Practice of Medicine The art and science of restoring or preserving health or due physical condition by means of medications, surgical operations or appliances, or manipulations.

Medical Doctor or Physician A person who is licensed and thereby legally qualified to practice medicine and has one of the following degrees:

- Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree earned from an accredited allopathic medical school, OR
- Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degree earned from an accredited osteopathic medical school, OR
- Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degree obtained outside of the United States

Midwife A person licensed and trained to care for a pregnant woman through labor and delivery. May or may not be a nurse.

Naturopathic Doctor (ND) A doctor who practices prevention of disease or assists natural healing by using agents such as special diets, herbs, vitamins, massage, etc. Allowed in 19 states, illegal in others.

Nurse A person who is licensed as an RN or LPN to care for individuals as a part of a medical team.

Nurse Practitioner (NP, APRN) A registered nurse who has received special advanced nursing training to work as a member of the health care team. May have a Master's or Doctorate Degree in Nursing Practice.

Optometrist (OD) A person who practices the profession of examining the eyes, by means of suitable instruments or appliances, for defects in vision and

Pharmacist (PharmD) A person licensed to prepare and dispense drugs and medicines and to provide information on drug interactions, adverse and therapeutic effects.

Physician Assistant (PA) A person trained in limited medical practice and to perform under the supervision of a physician.

Psychologist A person trained to use knowledge and research of the mind and behavior to solve problems. May be licensed to treat patients suffering from behavioral or mental illnesses or may work as social scientists to conduct psychological research and teach at colleges or universities.

Podiatrist or Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM) A doctor who diagnoses and treats foot disorders.

Licensed “Physicians” Without An MD/DO/MBBS Degree

- Chiropractic Doctor or Physician (DC)
- Naturopath (ND)
- Podiatrist or Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (DPM)

Non-Physician Health Professionals With Doctorate Degrees

- Physician Assistant (PA) with Doctor of Medical Science (DMS)

- Nurse Practitioner with Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) or Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD)**
- Optometrist (OD)
- Pharmacist (PharmD)
- Psychologist with PhD

Non-Physician Health Professionals Without Doctorate Degrees

- NP/APRN with Master’s Degree
- CRNA**
- Midwife or Certified Nurse Midwife
- PA
- Psychologist without PhD degree

** In some states and the Veteran’s Administration are lawfully allowed to practice without the direct supervision of a physician.

Non-Physicians Commonly Confused for Physicians

Non-Physician	Physician
Psychologist	Psychiatrist
Optometrist	Ophthalmologist
Nurse Anesthetist	Anesthesiologist