

Advance Directives



Objectives

- Define advance directives and identify the benefits
- Learn about a living will and durable power of attorney for health care
- Learn tips for preparing an advance directive
- Identify strategies for communicating with older relatives about the need for advance directives
- Identify resources that can help you complete your advance directives

What are Advance Directives?

- A written statement of your wishes, preferences and choices regarding end-of-life health care decisions
- A tool to help you think through and communicate your choices
- Written instructions about future medical care



Why Do We Need Advance Directives?

- Your wishes will be known
- Only used if you are unable to express your decisions
- This can happen to anyone – at any age
- Give your loved ones the gift of peace of mind – write down your wishes!



Considerations

Only used:

- If you are seriously ill or injured, and
- Unable to speak for yourself

Should include:

- Living will
- Medical (health care proxy) power of attorney



Living Wills

- What is a Living Will ?
- Why do we Need a Living Will ?
- When is a Living Will Used ?



Durable Power of Attorney

What is a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care or Health Care Proxy?

May also be called:

- Health care proxy or agent
- Health care surrogate
- Medical power of attorney for health care



Health Care Proxy

- Why do we need a Health Care Proxy?
- When do we use a Health Care Proxy?
- Who should you choose as your Health Care Proxy?
- Should I have both a Living Will and a Durable Power of Attorney?



Advance Directives Advantages

- You are in charge of making your own decisions
- Documents can be changed anytime
- You do not need an attorney
- Documents can help you express your wishes
- Individual forms are available to download at your state government website



Hospital DNR

- DNR = Do Not Resuscitate
- Another kind of advance directive
- A request not to have cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if your heart stops or if you stop breathing
- You can use an advance directive form or tell your doctor that you don't want to be resuscitated
- DNR orders are accepted by doctors and hospitals in all states

Five Wishes

- A national advance directive written in simple language that helps start important conversations about care
- It combines the living will and health-care power of attorney documents and addresses matters of comfort care, spirituality, forgiveness, and final wishes
- Created by the nonprofit organization Aging with Dignity

Tips

- Tips for Preparing Advance Directives
 - Some doctors offices can provide a form
 - You can write your wishes down by yourself
 - State health department or department on aging have forms
 - Lawyer – although it does not need to be a legal form
 - Computer software package for legal documents
- Assisting Older Relatives in Preparing Advance Directives



Resources

- **American Hospital Association** - www.putitinwriting.org
- **American Academy of Family Physicians** - www.aafp.org
- **Family Doctor. Org** - www.familydoctor.org
- **AARP** - www.aarp.org
- **Care.com** - www.care.com

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