



About Advance Directives

What is an Advance Directive?



An advance directive is legal document that explains how you want medical decisions about you to be made if you cannot make the decisions yourself. It also allows you to express your values and desires related to end-of-life care. Your advance directives should be routinely reviewed with your family, care team and physician. Advance directives can also be modified as your views or health situation change at any time. The best time to complete an advance directive is when you are healthy and able to make clear decisions.

Types of Advance Directives



Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST)

A medical order form that tells others your wishes for life-sustaining treatment. This form is appropriate for patients who want to avoid/receive any or all life-sustaining treatment.

May Include:

- Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) / Do Not Intubate (DNI) wishes
- Treatment guidelines
- Feeding/breathing tube instructions
- Future hospitalizations/transfers
- Artificial fluids/nutrition or medications

Considerations:

- Must be signed by you and a physician/nurse practitioner/physician assistant
- Not restricted by age or condition
- Keep on your refrigerator – emergency response workers are trained to look for this form there

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (DPOA)

A legal document that you choose a person to speak to your healthcare wishes should you become unable to do that for yourself.

May Include:

- Health care proxy

Considerations:

- Chosen individual(s) should know you well and advocate for you and your wishes - must be 18 years of age or older
- Not related to a will of property and finances
- Enacted only when a physician determines that you are unable to make your own healthcare decisions
- Must be signed by two witnesses

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Living Will (LW)

A legal document that informs health care professionals what type of medical treatment to perform if they have a terminal condition/situation in the future to keep them alive. It describes circumstances that an attempt to prolong life should be started or stopped.

May Include:

- Comfort Measures Only (CMO)/Palliative care
- Dialysis
- Tube feedings
- Breathing machines
- IV fluids
- DNR/DNI wishes
- Organ donation

Considerations:

- Usually completed by an attorney and includes estate planning
- Enacted only when a physician determines that you are unable to make your own healthcare decisions

Five Wishes

A legal form published to help people prepare an advance medical directive to address what should happen if they become ill and are no longer able to make decisions for themselves.

Considerations:

- Wishes 1 and 2 are a legal document
- Wishes 3, 4, and 5 are unique to Five Wishes only, in that they address matters of comfort care, spirituality, forgiveness and final wishes
- Accepted legally in over 40 states (including Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut) and helpful for planning in all 50 states

Your Coastal Care Team is Here to Help.

*To have a conversation about advance directives,
please contact your Coastal Medical practice.*



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