



Advance Directives

Hospitals and nursing homes are required to give you information about your rights as a patient under their care. Advance directives are a legal way for you to declare your wishes to choose or refuse medical treatment.

{Note: If you live in or get medical care in more than one state, have advance directives for all states involved.}

Two Types of Advance Directives

■ **Living Will.** This written document states what medical treatment you would want or not want if you were unable to state it yourself. A living will applies when you can't express your wishes on your own **and** you have a terminal illness or condition from which you aren't expected to survive.

In writing, you may choose or refuse:

- **Measures to Support Life**, such as a respirator (a machine to breathe for you).
- **Measures to Sustain Life**, such as tube feedings and kidney dialysis (a machine that does the work of your kidneys).
- **Measures to Enhance Life**. These keep you comfortable, but don't prolong life. Examples are pain medications and hospice care.

■ *Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care.*

This written document names a **person** who would make treatment decisions for you if you are not able to make them yourself. This person would state your wishes. Your condition does not have to be terminal or irreversible to have someone speak on your behalf.

Each state has its own laws on advance directives. Get forms for them from your lawyer, local hospital or library, or from your state's Web site. Other places for forms and information:

- Caring Connection
www.caringinfo.org
Click on "Planning Ahead" and "State-Specific Advance Directives."
- U.S. Living Will Registry
www.uslivingwillregistry.com

After you complete advance directives, discuss them with your family and close friend(s). Give your doctor a copy, too.