

Your life is a valuable gift, and you deserve the best medical care possible.

But medical care can't do everything. In some cases, medical care can't do anything to cure a deadly illness or injury. In such cases, many people like you want to have certain medical treatments stopped. That way they can pass away with dignity, in comfort and with the support of their loved ones.

The next few paragraphs describe how to give instructions to your doctors to help you avoid aggressive medical treatment. We call these instructions advance directives.

What rights do I have?

You have the right to make decisions about your medical care. You have to be informed about treatment and give consent to be treated. You can refuse or have taken away any medical treatment, with very limited exceptions. You can refuse treatment even if doing so makes your illness progress more quickly.

What is an advance directive?

Advance directives are documents that express your wishes if you are very ill or unconscious. By completing an advance directive before you are very ill, you let your doctor know what you want. If you are already very ill, it gives your doctor a better idea of what you want if you are going to pass away within a short time.

What do Federal laws say about advance directives?

The Federal Patient Self-Determination Act of 1990 describes your rights to accept and/or refuse treatments. The Federal Act requires all healthcare providers who accept Medicare or Medicaid to give you written information like this brochure, ask you if you have advance directives, and write down your answers. If you have an advance directive, someone here must put a copy of it in your patient record. You will get a description of this facility's policies. You can also complain to the state Medicaid agency.

Why should I complete an advance directive?

Sometimes you might be too sick to talk with your doctors. When you are very sick, your doctors might not understand your wishes or believe you know what you are asking for. If you are not able to wake up, unable to speak, or unable to clearly describe what you want, you won't be able to explain anything. By writing down your wishes, you can avoid this problem and make sure everyone knows what you want when you are ill. Without an advance directive, your family or friends could have a hard time making decisions for you. Your doctors might not know who should make decisions for you without an advance directive. Signing an advance directive is a gift for your loved ones, and insures you get the treatment that is right for you.

What does Tennessee law say about advance directives?

In Tennessee, you have the right as a competent adult to die with dignity. You have the right to make choices about your medical care. In Tennessee, we have two kinds of advance directive. An Advance Care Plan lets you write down your choices. An

Appointment of a Health Care Agent lets you assign a family member, friend, or other person to make decisions for you when you cannot. Below are further explanations of what these advance directives are.

Advance Care Plan

Formerly known as a living will, an advance care plan is a legal form that allows you to state that you want your death to be a natural death. The form lets you say that you don't want to be kept alive in certain situations. Unlike a normal will, the advance care plan says nothing about who gets your money when you pass away. It does allow you to avoid certain treatments and make decisions about your medical care.

Appointment of a Health Care Agent

Formerly known as durable power of attorney for healthcare, this form is to be used by an individual who only wants to appoint a health care agent and not complete the additional information on the advance care plan. The appointed agent will be able to make health care decisions for the individual if at any time they become incapacitated.

Physician Order for Scope of Treatment (POST)

This form serves as a Universal Do Not Resuscitate (UDNR) and includes end of life treatment options to be discussed between physician and his/her patient. The UDNR is required to accompany all patients when transferred or discharged to other health care settings.