



## What To Do After Signing Your Health Care Advance Directive

### GOOD ADVANCE PLANNING IS A CONTINUING CONVERSATION

Advance planning for health care is always a work in progress. That's because circumstances change, and lives change. One's values and priorities even change. As a sage remarked, "The world looks different when you're horizontal rather than vertical."

### FIVE TIMES TO RE-EXAMINE YOUR HEALTH CARE WISHES...

Re-examine your health care wishes whenever any of the "Five D's" occur:

1. Decade – when you start each new decade of your life.
2. Death – whenever you experience the death of a loved one.
3. Divorce – when you experience a divorce or other major family change.
4. Diagnosis – when you are diagnosed with a serious health condition.
5. Decline – when you experience a significant decline or deterioration of an existing health condition, especially when it diminishes your ability to live independently.

#### IF YOUR WISHES CHANGE...

Make a new advance directive if your old one no longer reflects your wishes. Ask about the proper way to cancel or amend your existing directive in your state. If you change your advance directive, it is important to notify everyone who has copies of your old medical directive forms.

### WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

1. Keep the original copy of your health care advance directive and these work sheets or other notes some place they can be easily found.
2. Give your chosen proxy a copy of the directive plus any worksheets or notes. Make sure your proxy knows where to find the original.

3. Give your doctor a copy of your directive. Make certain it is put in your medical record. Make sure your doctor will support your wishes. If your doctor has objections, you need to work them out or find another doctor.
4. Carry an advance directive wallet card with you.
5. If entering a hospital or nursing home, take a copy of your directive with you and ask that it be placed in your medical record.
6. Some organizations offer to register advance directives electronically and enable health care institutions to access them electronically. Some churches and synagogues keep advance directives on file for members. You may wish to consider such a service.

**IF YOU DON'T WANT EMERGENCY CPR, ONE MORE STEP...**

After completing your Advance Directive, **you may have to take one more step if you want to avoid CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) or other life support when an ambulance (911) is called.**

Some people with serious and irreversible conditions do not want an emergency medical team to give them CPR if their heart stops. If this is your wish, ask how to get a DNR Order (Do-Not-Resuscitate Order) that will be respected outside of hospitals. These are also called *Out-of-Hospital DNR Orders*, *Comfort-Care-Only Orders*, or by other similar names. They usually require your physician's signature and your consent. You will get a special identifying bracelet or document that must be visible if you have a medical crisis. If the emergency medical team sees the proper bracelet or document upon arrival, you can expect to receive all necessary comfort care—but not life support