

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

Making your own choices about end-of-life care



Our choices are what makes our lives our own.

We take for granted our ability to make our own decisions. No one ever wants to experience a time when they are unable to make their own decisions, especially if those decisions are about the kind of care you would want if you are injured, sick or at the end of life. When you choose to enroll in hospice care, an advance directive can be a valuable tool.

An advance directive is a legal document that helps to ensure your health care wishes will be respected. It allows you to express your treatment and care preferences in writing. And importantly, it requires that you identify a patient advocate of your choosing to make medical treatment and related personal care decisions for you if you are unable to speak for yourself.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS I CAN HELP MY FAMILY?

Sharing information about your health history, medications, and treatments is a good start. Allowing them to go with you to doctor's appointments and talking over care options is the best way for them to learn your wishes.

WHO CAN BE A PATIENT ADVOCATE?

Anyone who is at least 18 years of age may be appointed as a patient advocate. You should choose someone you trust who can handle the responsibility and is willing to serve in this role. The person must sign a form saying they accept the role.

HOW DO I APPOINT A PATIENT ADVOCATE?

You may use a form written by your attorney, or another organization, or write the document yourself. A form used to designate a patient advocate is available from Hospice of Michigan. Under Michigan law, the designation of patient advocate must be in writing, it must be signed, dated and witnessed, and the designated patient advocate must agree in writing.





In addition to completing an advance directive, it is important to talk about your care choices with your loved ones.

WHO CAN WITNESS MY SIGNATURE?

The designation must be signed in the presence of two witnesses who also sign the form. The witnesses cannot be a spouse, a child, a grandchild, a brother or sister, an employee of a company that provides you with life or health insurance, or an employee of the health care agency or institution that is caring for you.

WHY MIGHT I BE UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN MEDICAL TREATMENT DECISIONS?

You may become temporarily or permanently unable to make informed decisions because of unconsciousness, coma, brain injury, mental illness, degenerative illness such as Alzheimer's disease, or other medical conditions.

WHO DETERMINES IF I AM UNABLE TO MAKE MY OWN DECISIONS?

Your attending physician along with other health care professionals will make the determination as to whether you are able to make your health care decisions.

WILL HOSPICE OF MICHIGAN HONOR MY WISHES AND THOSE EXPRESSED BY MY PATIENT ADVOCATE?

Hospice of Michigan first honors your wishes expressed in your advance directives or as expressed by your patient advocate, then any other written documents, such as a living will.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PATIENT ADVOCATE DOESN'T FOLLOW MY WISHES?

If your hospice care team feels the patient advocate is not acting in accordance with your expressed wishes, they will refer the case to the Hospice of Michigan Ethics Committee. Patients and family members may also refer cases for an ethics consultation. The Committee only makes recommendations; treatment decisions are made by the patient, or the patient advocate, or the attending physician.

For information on Hospice of Michigan's policy on medical treatment decisions, please call the Office of Organizational Integrity: 888-247-5701.

ARE THERE OTHER ADVANCE DIRECTIVES?

Yes, a living will and a do-not-resuscitate order (DNR) are also considered advance directives. A living will is a statement that describes the kind of treatment you want if you become terminally ill. A living will is not legally binding in Michigan, but provides instruction to health care decision makers. A do-not-resuscitate order (DNR), is a document that states you do not wish to be resuscitated if your breathing or your heartbeat stops.

Advance directives are sometimes known by other names, including Patient Advocate, Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, Health Care Agent, Medical Durable Power of Attorney and Health Care Proxy.

WHAT DO I DO WITH THE DOCUMENT?

Copies of the original document are legally valid, so make several and give them to your patient advocate, family members, and physician. In an emergency, first responders will look in the freezer, glove box of your car, or wallet to find information, so place copies in those locations along with a list of your medications and other medical records.

It is a good idea to keep a card in your wallet behind your driver's license that includes contact information for your patient advocate and the location of your documents.

Bring your document with you when you go for treatment, are having surgery or are being admitted to a hospital, engaging home health, or moving into a nursing home.

Many people have found it convenient to scan a copy of their document to make it a portable document file (PDF), which can be emailed, texted, and even saved on a smart-phone.

You should review your patient advocate document regularly in case there are changes in your health status, life circumstance or relationships. If you need to draft a new document, remember to collect the old documents and destroy them as you distribute the new copies.

INTERNET RESOURCES

HAVE YOU HAD THE TALK?
www.haveyouhadthetalk.com

THE CONVERSATION PROJECT
<https://theconversationproject.org>

CARING CONNECTIONS/
STATE SPECIFIC FORMS
www.caringinfo.org

PEACE OF MIND/
MEDICAL AND LEGAL DECISIONS
www.legislature.mi.gov

MAKING MEDICAL DECISIONS FOR SOMEONE ELSE
www.americanbar.org

UNDERSTANDING HOSPICE
www.hospicefoundation.org

A nationally recognized leader in end-of-life care, Hospice of Michigan is the original—and largest—not-for-profit hospice provider in the state. Since 1978, we have remained committed to our not-for-profit mission to care for all those who need and seek our care regardless of age, diagnosis or financial circumstances.

As a member of the NorthStar Care Community, we collaborate with other not-for-profit providers, sharing a goal to continually provide unsurpassed care, guidance and quality of life for patients facing serious illness, which includes practicing the highest standards of hospice and palliative care. Collectively, we touch the lives of more than 9,800 patients and families each year.



888-247-5701

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**Services provided by our affiliate, Arbor Hospice*

***Services provided by our affiliate, Centrica Care Navigators*

****A proud partner of Mecosta-Osceola United Way*

Hospice of Michigan is a recognized 501c3 charitable organization.