

## Advance Directives

The forms that express your wishes  
about your **Health Care**

As life goes on there comes a time for most people when their goals about their health care change.

Usually this comes about in one of two ways. Either a catastrophic event happens which changes your health outlook profoundly, or you gradually decline in vigor and in health to the point where being kept alive by all means possible is no longer *what you wish*.

We strongly emphasize the words: *what you wish*. Only you can decide what your goals are. And when your goals change it is important to let your doctor know them.

The best way to do this is to make an appointment with your practitioner specifically to discuss your goals. This discussion takes time, and a visit should be devoted for this purpose only. By discussing your ideas and questions you will clarify your goals and you can put a plan for how to achieve them into writing.

Fortunately, there are documents that you and your practitioner can complete which will help you communicate your goals with other health care personnel (such as emergency responders, emergency room doctors, surgeons, cardiologists, and others). Should your ideas change in the future, it is simple to change your documents.

These documents include MOLST forms (Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment), Proxy forms, and DNR forms (DO Not Resuscitate). You won't likely use all these forms. Maybe you will use only a Proxy. But having a conversation with your practitioner and getting your ideas put into written form will give you power to control your future and peace of mind. The forms will potentially save you and your loved ones a great deal of grief.

By instituting these simple steps you will be reaching out. By scheduling appointments just for the discussion you will relieve some your own time pressure and stress. By helping your patients formulate advance directives you will be empowering them and alleviating anxiety and potential suffering.

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