



HCLC OM EOL Seminar

Advanced Health Care Directives

April 22, 2023

Sharing information for your future use today!

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- TODAY'S PRESENTATION
 - Practical example/sample process
 - AHCD issues/types defined
 - Questions



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- Practical example/sample process



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- **AHCD Topics:**
 - **Advance Health Care Planning**
 - **Common Advance Directives for Health Care**
 - **Living Will**
 - **Healthcare Powers of Attorney**
 - **Do-not-resuscitate (DNR) Orders**
 - **Physician Orders for Life-saving Treatment (POLSTs)**
 - **Other types: Values-based Directives; Psychiatric Advance Directives**
 - **Organ and Tissue Donation**
 - **How Do I Get Started?**

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- **What is advance care planning?**

- Advance care planning involves discussing and preparing for future decisions about your medical care if you become seriously ill or unable to communicate your wishes. Having meaningful conversations with your loved ones is the most important part of advance care planning. Many people also choose to put their preferences in writing by completing legal documents called advance directives.

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Issues in an advance directive:

- Specific issues related to the end of your life can include:
 1. Which person will make health care decisions for you if you are unable to make your own?
 2. What medical treatments and care are acceptable to you? Are there some that you fear or don't wish to have?
 3. Do you want to be resuscitated if you stop breathing and/or your heart stops?
 4. Do you want to be hospitalized or stay at home, or somewhere else, if you are seriously or terminally ill?
 5. In countries such as the United States, how will your care be paid for? Will your insurance cover it? Some treatments and caregiving or nursing homes can be costly and leave your loved ones with a financial burden at a time when they're already grieving your loss of health.
 6. What actually happens when you die? Will your loved ones be prepared for the decisions they may have to make on your behalf?

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Myths about advance health care directives:

- **Myth: You must have an advance health care directive to stop treatment near the end of life.**
 - **Fact:** Treatment can be stopped without an advance directive if everyone involved agrees. However, without some kind of advance directive, decisions may be more difficult and disputes more likely.
- **Myth: An advance directive means “Do not treat.”**
 - **Fact:** An advance directive can express both the treatment that you do want—and that which you don't want. Even if you do NOT want treatment to cure you, you should always be kept reasonably pain free and comfortable.
- **Myth: If I name a health care proxy, I give up the right to make my own decisions.**
 - **Fact:** Naming a health care proxy or agent does not take away any of your authority. You always have the right, while you are still competent, to override the decision of your proxy or revoke the directive.
- **Myth: I should wait until I am sure about what I want before signing an advance directive.**
 - **Fact:** Most of us have some ambivalence about what we would want because treatment near the end of life can be complicated. Advance health care directives can always be changed if/when your wishes or circumstances change.
- **Myth: Advance directives are only for old people.**
 - **Fact:** Younger adults actually have more at stake, because, if stricken by serious disease or accident, medical technology may keep them alive but comatose or insentient for decades. Every person aged 18 or over should prepare a directive.

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- **Common Types of AHCD:**

- **Living Will:** a written document that outlines a person's health care wishes for end-of-life care in the event that something prevents them from voicing their own values, wants, wishes and needs for whatever reason and they cannot make such decisions on their own. Living wills typically tell health care providers what treatments the person does or doesn't want when the individual no longer has the competency to make such decisions, and some include religious preferences as well.
- **Healthcare Powers of Attorney:** also called a health care proxy or health care agent, is someone a person appoints or designates to advocate for them in the event that they can no longer advocate for themselves.
- **Do-not-resuscitate (DNR) Orders:** are medical orders written by a doctor explicitly instructing health care providers not to use cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) should the patient's breathing stop or heart stop beating.
- **Physician Orders for Life-saving Treatment (POLSTs):** outline a plan of end-of-life care that reflects the patient's care preferences as well as their health care provider's judgment based on a medical evaluation. This advance directive is only valid once agreed upon and signed by both parties.



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Organ and Tissue Donation:

- Organ donation is the act of taking healthy organs and tissues from one person and giving them to someone else. Making the decision to donate your organs is one of the most generous gifts you can give.
- **How can someone register to be an organ donor?**
 - You can register to be an organ donor at the time you renew your driver's license or state ID at your local Department of Motor Vehicles. You can also [register online](#).
- **Is my brain included when I sign up to donate my organs?**
 - No. It's common for people to think that signing up to be an organ donor includes brain donation, but the purpose and the process are different. This is because brain donation is only used to advance scientific research, versus helping another person stay alive through a transplant. Depending on the circumstances of death, it may be possible to donate organs for transplant as well as the brain for scientific research.
 - Brain donation is important in helping researchers to better understand how different disorders, like Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, affect the brain, and how we might better treat and prevent them across different groups of people.

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How Do I Get Started?:

- For the Living Will, the Proxy Appointment, and the Health Care Durable Power of Attorney, you may use the form created by law. The form is available in the “LIFEPLAN A Gift to Your Family” consumer guide, on-line at www.alabar.org/public/lifeplan.cfm and at most courthouses, hospitals, nursing homes, and through the Alabama Medicaid Agency. You must read the form carefully before completing the document. Completing the document incorrectly may invalidate it at the time when it is most needed.
- An attorney can assist you in completing the form or write an individualized form for you. Begin by thinking through your options and talking with your family. If you have specific questions, consult your attorney, physician or health care professional.

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How do I get started with advance care planning?

To get started with advance care planning, consider the following steps:

- **Reflect on your values and wishes.** This can help you think through what matters most at the end of life and guide your decisions about future care and medical treatment.
- **Talk with your doctor about advance directives.** Advance care planning is [covered by Medicare](#) as part of your annual wellness visit. If you have private health insurance, check with your insurance provider. Talking to a health care provider can help you learn about your current health and the kinds of decisions that are likely to come up. For example, you might ask about the decisions you may face if your high blood pressure leads to a stroke.
- **Choose someone you trust to make medical decisions for you.** Whether it's a family member, a loved one, or your lawyer, it's important to choose someone you trust as your health care proxy. Once you've decided, discuss your values and preferences with them. If you're not ready to discuss specific treatments or care decisions yet, try talking about your general preferences. You can also try other ways to share your wishes, such as writing a letter or watching a video on the topic together.

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How do I get started with advance care planning (cont.)?

- **Complete your advance directive forms.** To make your care and treatment decisions official, you can complete a living will. Similarly, once you decide on your health care proxy, you can make it official by completing a durable power of attorney for health care.
- **Share your forms with your health care proxy, doctors, and loved ones.** After you've completed your advance directives, make copies and store them in a safe place. Give copies to your health care proxy, health care providers, and lawyer. Some states have registries that can store your advance directive for quick access by health care providers and your proxy.
- **Keep the conversation going.** Continue to talk about your wishes and update your forms at least once each year or after major life changes. If you update your forms, file and keep your previous versions. Note the date the older copy was replaced by a new one. If you use a registry, make sure the latest version is on record.
- Everyone approaches the process differently. Remember to be flexible and take it one step at a time. Start small. For example, try simply talking with your loved ones about what you appreciate and enjoy most about life. Your values, treatment preferences, and even the people you involve in your plan may change over time. The most important part is to start the conversation.

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How to find advance directive forms

- You can establish your advance directives for little or no cost. Many states have their own forms that you can access and complete for free. Here are some ways you might find free advance directive forms in your state:
 - Contact your State Attorney General's Office.
 - Contact your [local Area Agency on Aging](#). You can find your area agency phone number by visiting the [Eldercare Locator](#) or by calling 800-677-1116.
 - Download your state's form online from one of these national organizations: [AARP](#), [American Bar Association](#), or [National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization](#).
 - If you are a veteran, contact your [local Veteran's Affairs \(VA\) office](#). The VA offers an [advance directive specifically for veterans](#).
- Some people spend a lot of time in more than one state. If that's your situation, consider preparing advance directives using the form for each state, and keep a copy in each place, too.

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- Suggested AHCD Sources of Information

- https://www.planningmyway.org/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw8qmhBhCIARIsANAtb_oefnLauUtdQ4mGR2EWXfo_OOJeL1iXrEw0hCa-H48A2mtNRLcie71caAre4EALw_wcB
- <https://www.legalcontracts.com/contracts/us-living-will-form/?loc=US>
- <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/advance-care-planning-advance-directives-health-care>
- <https://www.alaha.org/advance-directives/>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/living-wills/art-20046303>
- <https://www.caring.com/caregivers/advance-directive/>
- <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/end-of-life/advanced-health-care-directives-and-living-wills.htm>
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/what-is-an-advance-directive>
- <https://advancedirectives.com>
- <https://www.caringinfo.org/planning/advance-directives/>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advance_healthcare_directive



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- Questions?

