

ADVANCED DIRECTIVES



"LET MY WISHES BE KNOWN"

"Let my wishes be known": What is it not?

We are partners together as a health care team. We desire to respect your wishes regarding your medical care. We need to know from you what your wishes are. If you have reached a decision, please let us know. If you desire our participation in reaching a decision, we will provide that assistance to you.

The purpose is to state, in advance, one's wishes for any period when it becomes impossible to maintain the quality of life one desires.

The freedom to decide one's own destiny is the right of every competent person. This includes the right to accept or refuse specific medical treatment. Many people have definite opinions on what medical treatment they wish. People want to choose their own health care. People want control over their own health care decisions including their way of life and manner of death.

Why do I want the care team to know my wishes?

When a resident is too ill to make decisions, family or powers of attorney/guardians must make decisions on the resident's behalf. These decisions are often fraught with guilt or conflict and can be very difficult to make at a time of crisis. Discussing these concerns and decisions in advance with the resident, can alleviate possible conflict later. It also provides for the person's wishes to be acted upon.

Range of care interventions

Interventions may range from full treatment and use of extraordinary measures to palliative or supportive care.

There are many issues to consider when making your decision. Some conditions can be cured with specialized treatments, ie. antibiotics for pneumonia or bladder infections or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for sudden unanticipated cardiac arrest. For some individuals who are in a chronic debilitated state, this cure approach to treatment may not be desired.

For other conditions there is no possibility of a complete recovery, (eg: Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, strokes or certain cancers). Each person is able to accept, cope or live with a certain degree of disability. No two persons are alike and therefore, their care decisions will be different.

The degree of intervention desired may vary. Some people will want full assessments, ie. blood tests, x-rays, transfer to hospital and treatments for all medical problems and others may want comfort measures (eg. pain control, no transfers to other health care facilities, social-emotional Support, promotion of nutrition). Some may want something in between.

Reaching an informed decision

We, as partners with you on the care team, appreciate how difficult it must be for you to reach such a difficult decision. This is just an introduction to the range of medical interventions that you can expect from us. We will be meeting with you after admission to help you make an informed decision.

You can alter your decision at any time, especially as your condition changes. "Let your wishes be known" to the health care team; we will always respect and support your wishes.