

Introduction to Advance Care Planning



What is Advance Care Planning?

Advance care planning is for all adults 18 and older. It is talking about future health care decisions if you had a sudden event, like a serious accident or illness, and could not make your own decisions. A person close to you would need to make choices for you. This person is called a health care agent or attorney in fact.

It is important to write down your goals, values and preferences using documents called advance directives. These documents should be updated regularly and shared with your health care agent, loved ones, physician, and hospital.

What is a Health Care Agent?

A health care agent is the person you choose to make medical decisions for you if you cannot make them for yourself. You authorize this person to make decisions with your health care providers about your care. The information below will help you select a health care agent.

Who should I select as my Health Care Agent?

When selecting your health care agent, choose someone who:

- Is able to talk on your behalf about your goals, values, and preferences and what “living well” or a “good day” means to you.
- Understands what the health care agent does and is willing to do this role.
- Can carry out your decisions (even if they do not agree with the decision).
- Is able to make decisions in difficult or stressful times.

Your health care agent must be at least 18 years or older. They cannot be your health care provider or an employee at your hospital or clinic (unless they are your spouse, state registered domestic partner, father, mother, or your adult child, brother, or sister).