

YOUR WISHES

ADVANCE HEALTH CARE PLANNING

The Patient's Right to Decide

Every competent adult has the right to make decisions concerning his or her own health, including the right to choose or refuse medical treatment.

When a person becomes unable to make decisions due to a physical or mental change, such as being in a coma or developing dementia (like Alzheimer's disease), they are considered incapacitated. To make sure that an incapacitated person's decisions about health care will still be respected, the Florida legislature enacted legislation pertaining to health care advance directives (Chapter 765, Florida Statutes). The law recognizes the right of a competent adult to make an advance directive instructing his or her physician to provide, withhold, or withdraw life-prolonging procedures; to designate another individual to make treatment decisions if the person becomes unable to make his or her own decisions; and/or to indicate the desire to make an anatomical donation after death.

By law hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, hospices, and health maintenance organizations (HMOs) are required to provide their patients with written information, such as this pamphlet, concerning health care advance directives. The state rules that require this include 58A-2.0232, 59A-3.254, 59A- 4.106, 59A-8.0245, and 59A-12.013, Florida Administrative Code.



Your life. Our specialty.

www.FloridaMedicalClinic.com

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(See Reverse)

813.780.8440

MORE INFORMATION ON ADVANCE HEALTH CARE PLANNING

Before making a decision about advance directives you might want to consider additional options and other sources of information, including the following:

- As an alternative to a health care surrogate, or in addition to, you might want to designate a durable power of attorney. Through a written document you can name another person to act on your behalf. It is similar to a health care surrogate, but the person can be designated to perform a variety of activities (financial, legal, medical, etc.). You can consult an attorney for further information or read Chapter 709, Florida Statutes. If you choose someone as your durable power of attorney be sure to ask the person if he or she will agree to take this responsibility, discuss how you would like matters handled, and give the person a copy of the document.
- If you are terminally ill (or if you have a loved one who is in a persistent vegetative state) you may want to consider having a pre-hospital Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNRO). A DNRO identifies people who do not wish to be resuscitated from respiratory or cardiac arrest. The pre-hospital DNRO is a specific yellow form available from the Florida Department of Health (DOH). Your attorney, health care provider, or an ambulance service may also have copies available for your use. You, or your legal representative, and your physician sign the DNRO form. More information is available on the DOH website, www.doh.state.fl.us or www.MyFlorida.com (type DNRO in these website search engines) or call (850) 245-4440. When you are admitted to a hospital the pre-hospital DNRO may be used during your hospital stay or the hospital may have its own form and procedure for documenting a Do Not Resuscitate Order.
- If a person chooses to donate, after death, his or her body for medical training and research the donation will be coordinated by the Anatomical Board of the State of Florida. You, or your survivors, must arrange with a local funeral home, and pay, for a preliminary embalming and transportation of the body to the Anatomical Board located in Gainesville, Florida. After being used for medical education or research, the body will ordinarily be cremated. The cremains will be returned to the loved ones, if requested at the time of donation, or the Anatomical Board will spread the cremains over the Gulf of Mexico. For further information contact the Anatomical Board of the State of Florida at (800) 628-2594 or www.med.ufl.edu/anatbd.
- If you would like to learn more on organ and tissue donation, please visit the Joshua Abbott Organ and Tissue Donor Registry at www.DonateLifeFlorida.org where you can become organ, tissue and eye donors online. If you have further questions about organ and tissue donation you may want to talk to your health care provider.
- Various organizations also make advance directive forms available. One such document is “Five Wishes” that includes a living will and a health care surrogate designation. “Five Wishes” gives you the opportunity to specify if you want tube feeding, assistance with breathing, pain medication, and other details that might bring you comfort such as what kind of music you might like to hear, among other things. You can find out more at:

Aging with Dignity
www.AgingWithDignity.org
(888) 594-7437

Other resources include:

American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
www.aarp.org
(Type “advance directives” in the website’s search engine)

Brochure: End of Life Issues
www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov
(888) 419-3456

Your local hospital, nursing home, hospice, home health agency, and your attorney or health care provider may be able to assist you with forms or further information.