

ADVANCED DIRECTIVES FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What Are Advance Directives?

They are legal documents that ensure your wishes are followed if you cannot make decisions for yourself. New York State recognizes three types of advance directives:

New York State Health Care Proxy

- *What it does:* Lets you name a health care agent who will make decisions if you cannot make them yourself.
- *When it takes effect:* Only after two doctors decide you are not able to make your own decisions.
- *Standard New York State form?* Yes. (See More Resources.) Give copies to your health care agent, your close family members, your doctors and others involved in your care.

Living Will

- *What it does:* Lets you say what care you want - or don't want - at the end of life.
- *When it takes effect:* When you cannot make your own decisions, and your doctor confirms that you have an incurable condition.
- *Standard New York State form?* No. Sample forms are available. (See More Resources.) You can also write special instructions on your Health Care Proxy form.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order

- *What it does:* Tells health care providers and emergency workers not to revive you if you stop breathing or your heart stops beating.
- *When it takes effect:* When signed by your doctor.
- *Standard New York State form?* Yes.
- Hospitals have their own forms.
- Anyone not in a hospital can use a 'Nonhospital Order Not to Resuscitate.' (See More Resources.) Keep the form where everyone can see it.
- If you are too sick to agree to a DNR, your health care agent or your closest family member can agree.
- You can also write DNR instructions on your Health Care Proxy form or Living Will.

Advance Directives Are Not Just for the Elderly

There are times when people - even young, healthy people - can't make their own decisions about medical care.

- You could be injured in an accident and arrive at the hospital unconscious.
- You might be under general anesthesia for routine surgery when something unexpected happens.

- You could have an illness that leaves you unable to speak, or you are comatose.

Who Will Speak for You?

- Friends or family members can always tell health care providers what they think you would want. *But in New York State, they cannot direct your medical care unless you appoint them in writing.*
- No one - not even your spouse - can act on your behalf unless you appoint them using the New York Health Care Proxy form. "Proxy" means "substitute" - a person who can act as your agent.
- The New York Health Care Proxy form is an **advance directive** that lets you express your wishes in advance.
- You can say what care you do - or do NOT - want. Your health care proxy (your agent) must follow your directions.

Gain More Control Over Your Care.

- Everyone 18 and older should have a health care agent.
- When you appoint an agent, you help your family avoid confusion and conflict. There is no doubt about who will make decisions.
- When you appoint an agent, you claim your legal right to ask for - or refuse - medical care.
- Hospitals, nursing homes, doctors and other health care providers must follow your agent's decisions as if they were your own.

How to Appoint a Health Care Agent

It's easier than many people think.

- Select an adult you trust, such as a family member or a friend, as your agent on the New York State Health Care Proxy form. You can also name an alternate agent who will take over if your primary agent is not available.
- Discuss your wishes with your health care agent. Talk about your values and beliefs.
- No one can plan for every scenario. The more your agent knows, the easier it will be for that person to make decisions for you.
- If you wish, you can use the New York State Health Care Proxy form to write specific directions about the kind of care you want or don't want, just as you would in a *Living Will* or a *Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order*.
- If you like, you can simply write, "*my agent knows my wishes.*"
- You can also use the New York State Health Care Proxy form to give instructions about organ donation, if you wish.
- You do not need a lawyer or a notary to sign the form - just two adult witnesses.
- You can change your New York State Health Care Proxy form or appoint a new health care agent whenever you want. Simply fill out a new form.

NEW YORK STATE LAW

New York State Law allows the patients to provide physicians "Advance Directives" under "Patients' Rights in State of New York". For more information and relevant forms please visit http://www.health.state.ny.us/professionals/patients/patient_rights/

WESTCHESTER ENDOSCOPY CENTER'S POLICY ON ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

Your physician will discuss the specifics of your procedure with you and will advise you about the associated risks before the procedure is performed. However, most procedures performed in this facility are considered minimal risk. Therefore, it is our policy, regardless of the contents of an Advance Directive or instructions from a Health Care Surrogate or Power of Attorney, that if unfortunately, an adverse event occurs during your treatment at this facility, we will initiate resuscitative or other stabilizing measures and transfer you to an acute care hospital for further evaluation. The acute care hospital will order further treatment or withdrawal of treatment measures in accordance with your wishes, Advance Directive or Health Care Power of Attorney. If you have advance directives in place, we strongly recommend that you provide us a copy at the time of checking in.