

What is Advance Care Planning and why should I do it now? Advance Care Planning is making decisions about the type of care you would like if you are ever unable to speak for yourself. Now is the time to have conversations and complete documents that identify your wishes, values, and beliefs. This caring act will relieve loved ones and healthcare providers of the stress and heartache of guessing what you would want.

What is an Advance Directive and why do I need one?

An Advance Directive is a legal document in which you can specify what actions should be taken for your health if you are no longer able to make decisions for yourself. It includes two parts: Selection of Healthcare Agent(s) and a Living Will.

PART 1: SELECTION OF HEALTHCARE AGENT

This section of the Advance Directive assigns a person(s) to assist the medical team to make healthcare decisions for you when you are unable to make decisions for yourself.

- Agent is able to consult with doctor, view medical records, and give consent for treatment
- Agent is bound to make decisions according to your known wishes
- Does not afford agent the ability to conduct financial business on your behalf

PART 2: LIVING WILL

This section of the Advance Directive provides instructions for your future medical treatment when you cannot decide for yourself, including inpatient treatment and/or end-of-life care.

- Does not require an attorney or notary in Maryland
- Does not guide EMS personnel

Your Advance Directive must be signed by two witnesses who are both 18+ years old. Neither witness can include your Healthcare Agent(s), and neither witness can benefit financially or otherwise from your death.

When should I complete my Advance Directive?

You can complete your Advance Directive once you are 18 years of age. You should do so regardless of your current health conditions or need. Accidents, natural disasters, or health crises can happen at any time. It always seems too early until it's too late.

Who should get a copy of my Advance Directive?

- Your Healthcare Agent(s)
- Hospital
- Doctors and specialists
- Family and/or loved ones that may be contacted

Where else should I keep a copy of my Advance Directive?

- In your Red Folder (see other side for more information)
- In your vehicle's glove compartment
- With your dated list of medications

What other forms do I need?

MOLST (MEDICAL ORDERS FOR LIFE-SUSTAINING TREATMENT)

This form designates medical orders for current treatment. It is intended to stay with you as you move into and out of various healthcare facilities and settings (e.g., assisted living, home with HHC, nursing home, hospital, hospice). The MOLST Form must be signed by a treating Physician, Nurse Practitioner, or Physician Assistant.

- Does guide EMS personnel
- Replaces old DNR Form
- Does not expire but should be reviewed during transitions of care

FINANCIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY

This form designates an agent who will conduct business on your behalf if you should become unable to do so (e.g., pay bills, sell property, etc.). The same person can be your Financial Power of Attorney and your Healthcare Agent. This form must be completed by an individual with capacity to decide for themselves. It is generally recommended that this form be completed with an attorney present.

- Does not automatically apply to making healthcare decisions

What is the Red Folder and how do I use it?

The Red Folder is a place to keep important healthcare paperwork organized and in easy reach. In it we recommend including copies of your Advance Directive, the MOLST form, a current list of your healthcare providers and medications, and a recent photo. The folder is bright red for easy identification and has magnet strips on the back so you can attach it to your refrigerator. Emergency responders (including paramedics, firefighters, and police officers) are trained to look for this folder on refrigerators when responding to a medical crisis.



How can I get help with Advance Care Planning?

Appointments with licensed social workers are available free of cost to the community.

For questions, more information, or to set up a personalized appointment or presentation, please contact:

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