

Five Steps:

A Guide to Help Plan Your End-of-Life and Future Health Care

It's always a good idea to plan ahead, especially for end-of-life and other future health care. You can do this with an advance health care directive.



Please begin the following Five Steps today.

An advance health care directive is a valuable tool for planning your future health care. It allows you to have a voice in your care, or to designate a trusted person to speak for you, when you are no longer able to speak for yourself.

It will also help your family and friends by sparing them from having to make tough decisions without knowing what you would want when you have a serious medical condition.

An advance health care directive is important not just for people who know that they will be facing end-of-life decisions. Anyone may need an advance health care directive if they have a sudden illness, accident, or other unexpected health care event that leaves them unable to speak for themselves.

You should consider making an advance health care directive that includes features of both a living will and a health care power of attorney.

- In a living will you give instructions about life-sustaining treatment and other end-of-life care that you want to be followed when you can no longer speak for yourself.
- In a health care power of attorney, you appoint a close family member or other trusted person as your health care agent. This person may make health care decisions for you when you can no longer speak for yourself, or in other circumstances you describe.

For more information about advance health care directives and the five steps, talk to your doctor or visit www.myfamilywellness.org



Pennsylvania
MEDICAL SOCIETY[®]
Doctors and Patients. Preserve the Relationship.[®]

Five Steps to Plan Your Future Health Care:

1. Talk to your doctor about end-of-life care and advance health care directives.

Your doctor can help you understand important medical determinations that affect your rights, such as when you would be considered unable to make your own health care decisions.

Your doctor can also explain good and bad features of artificial life-support and other medical measures that may be options for your end-of-life care, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), mechanical respiration, artificial nutrition and hydration (tube feeding), and kidney dialysis.

2. Decide who you want to make health care decisions for you and the powers you want this person to have.

Think about who you would trust to follow your wishes, can make tough choices, and is willing and able to serve as your health care agent.

3. Decide your wishes regarding your end-of-life and other future care.

Think about how you would like to be cared for if you can no longer speak for yourself. This is challenging. For example, you'll need to think about what life-sustaining treatment and other care you would want at the end of

your life. You also will need to think about what personal wishes and values you want your health care agent to consider when making decisions about your care.

4. Write down your decisions and follow the simple instructions to make your decisions into a legal advance health care directive.

Pennsylvania law makes it easy to make an advance health care directive. The Pennsylvania Medical Society's Guide includes complete instructions and explains how to obtain a form that you may use. Ask your doctor for a copy, or go to www.myfamilywellness.org to read and print a copy.

5. Make your wishes known to your doctors, your health care agent, and your family.

After you've made an advance health care directive, the final important step is to share your wishes. Keep an original copy in a safe place. Ask your doctor to put a copy in your medical record and take a copy with you if you are being admitted to the hospital. Give a copy to your health care agent and discuss your wishes with your agent. And be sure to talk about it with any family or friends you would

expect to attend to your needs if you can't speak for yourself or in other circumstances.

The end of life is stressful enough for your family and friends. You can relieve some of the burden with a clear, well-written advance health care directive.

For more information about advance health care directives and the five steps, talk to your doctor or visit www.myfamilywellness.org



Pennsylvania
MEDICAL SOCIETY®
Doctors and Patients. Preserve the Relationship.®

