

Video 2

Advance Care Planning Documents



0:01 – Narrator: Taking the time to talk with your loved ones is the best way to ensure that, if you are unable to speak for yourself, your wishes are known and followed. These conversations help your loved ones know what you would want and help relieve the burden they may face in making a difficult health care decision for you. These are conversations that, while sometimes uncomfortable, are very important.

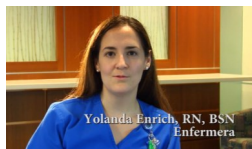


0:35 – Narrator: But, once you and your loved ones have talked about this, how do you communicate your wishes to your medical providers in the event of an illness or other medical situation in which you cannot speak for yourself? During the stress of a severe illness or injury, it may be difficult for your family to remember and communicate your wishes about medical care...especially if you have not written them down.



1:03 – Narrator: Fortunately, there are two documents that can help you clearly state your wishes and that medical professionals are familiar with: they are a 'health care power of attorney', and a 'living will'. These documents are called Advance Directives, because they give others directions, and because you prepare them in 'advance' of a situation.

Yolanda Enrich, Nurse:



1:31 – Yolanda Enrich: *"The 'health care power of attorney' document is a legal document that allows you to name a person, who we call a "health care agent", to make medical decisions for you in any kind of medical situation should you be unable to make those decisions for yourself.*

For example, if you have an accident at work and are unconscious and unable to speak for yourself, your health care agent can be called upon to make decisions about your medical care.

It's important that you have had conversations about your wishes with your health care agent, that he or she knows you have appointed him or her, and that he or she is willing to speak for you should they need to."



2:13 – Narrator: You should discuss your wishes concerning life-prolonging measures, mental health treatment, and other health care decisions with your health care agent. The "health care power of attorney" document also allows you to add instructions to the document regarding other aspects of medical care, such as whether or not you would like to be an organ donor, or what you would like to happen to your body after death.



2:41 – Narrator: What happens if you have not completed a "health care power of attorney" document and you are unable to make your own health care decisions? If this is the case, your health care providers are required to follow state law to determine the appropriate person to make a decision. Keep in mind that this might not be the person you would choose to make your medical decisions for you. For instance, in our last video, this would mean that health care providers would be required to listen to Maria's husband, who she does not want to make medical decisions for her.

Dr. Jimmy Ruiz, Oncologist:



3:25 – Dr. Jimmy Ruiz: “A ‘living will’ lets you state your desire to NOT receive life-prolonging measures in any or all of the following situations:

You have a condition that cannot be cured and that will result in your death in a short period of time.

You are unconscious and your doctors are confident that you will not regain consciousness.

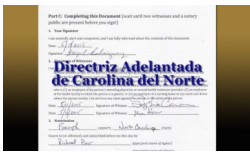
You have advanced dementia or a significant loss in mental function that cannot be cured.

It is important to remember that this does not mean that we will stop treating you. Whether you want life-prolonging life measures or not, we will always continue to keep you clean, comfortable, and as free of pain as possible.”



4:22 – Narrator: Remember, the ‘health care power of attorney’ document allows you to pick a person to make health care decisions for you in any situation where you cannot speak for yourself.

The ‘living will’ allows you to state in writing that you do not want life-prolonging measures in 3 specific situations, in case you cannot speak for yourself.



4:49 – Narrator: We recommend that you complete both of the documents, as they are both effective tools in helping health care providers and your loved ones provide the type of care you would want.

Narrator: Your North Carolina Advance Directive is an important document. You should sign your advance directive in the presence of two qualified witnesses and a notary public. Keep the original signed document in a secure but accessible place.



5:16 – Narrator: You should also give photocopies of the signed original to your health care agent and your health care providers. Additionally, if you enter a health care facility, give your physician or nurse a copy of your advance directive or tell your health care agent to give them a copy of your directive.

Francis Rivers Meza, Chaplain:



5:42 – Francis Rivers Meza: “As a Chaplain I have had many opportunities to work with families who are members of a Church, and sadly, too many times I’ve seen accidents occur. In these situations, it is especially tragic when those at the bedside are not married, or lack documents, and thus lack the authority to participate in the health care decisions of their loved ones in the hospital. This is one reason why it’s so important to complete advance directives.”



6:04 – Narrator: We make plans for many things in life – plans for medical care for serious illnesses are just as important as planning for a vacation, our education, our retirement, and the birth of a child. Now that you’ve begun the conversation, make sure to keep it going! Your life, your values, your beliefs, your relationships, and your wishes will change as you gain more life experience. Discussing those changes with your loved ones is the best way to ensure your wishes are respected. By having these conversations, you can help them to take care of you in the future, and you also help them by letting them know what to do for you, and that is what love and respect is all about.