

You Have the Right

**Using
Advance
Directives
to State
Your
Wishes
About
Your
Medical
Care**

Many people today worry about the medical care they would get if they became too sick to make their wishes known.

Some people may not want to spend months or years on life support. Others may want every step taken to lengthen life.

You have a choice

A growing number of people are acting to make their wishes known. You can state your medical care wishes in writing while you are healthy and able to choose.

Your health care facility must explain your right to state your wishes about medical care. It also must ask you if you have put your wishes in writing.

This brochure explains your rights under Ohio law to accept or refuse medical care. It will help you choose your own medical care.

This brochure also explains how you can state your wishes about the care you would want if you could not choose for yourself.

This brochure does not contain legal advice, but will help you understand your rights under the law.

For legal advice, you may want to talk to a lawyer. For information about free legal services, call toll-free 1-800-589-5888, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

What are my rights to choose my medical care?

You have the right to choose your own medical care.

If you don't want a certain type of care, you have the right to tell your doctor you don't want it.

What if I'm too sick to decide? What if I can't make my wishes known?

Most people can make their wishes about their medical care known to their doctors. Some people become too sick to tell their doctors about the type of care they want.

Under Ohio law, you have the right to fill out a form while you're able to act for yourself. The form tells your doctors what you want done if you can't make your wishes known.

What kinds of forms are there?

Under Ohio law, there are two different forms, or **advance directives**, you can use. You can use either a Living Will, or a Durable Power of Attorney for medical care.

You fill out an advance directive while you're able to act for yourself. The advance directive lets your doctor and others know your wishes about medical care.

Do I have to fill out an advance directive before I get medical care?

No. No one can make you fill out an advance directive. You decide if you want to fill one out.

Who can fill out an advance directive?

Anyone 18 years old or older who is of sound mind and can make his or her own decisions can fill one out.

Do I need a lawyer?

No, you don't need a lawyer to fill out an advance directive. You may decide you want to talk with a lawyer.

Do the people giving me medical care have to follow my wishes?

Yes, if your wishes follow state law. However, Ohio law includes a conscience clause. A person giving you medical care may not be able to follow your wishes because they go against his or her conscience. If so, they will help you find someone else who will follow your wishes.

