

# **ADVANCE DIRECTIVES: I'M TOO HEALTHY AND TOO YOUNG!**

## **What is an Advance Directive?**

An Advance Directive is a legal document that allows you to communicate your personal healthcare decisions and choices about end of life care in advance of any life-limiting medical crisis. The document is used at a time when you are unable or unwilling to speak for yourself. It addresses one of the most uncomfortable topics both healthcare providers and the general public need to face.

**No one knows when or if illness might happen in the future; you can be young or old. With the Advance Directive for Health Care, your health care choices and desires can be honored. It is power that all are entitled to have. Loved ones can be privy to health care choices and understand individual values and concerns regarding health care.**

## **What are Your Personal Health Care Choices?**

Personal health care choices might include: CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation); nutrition, life sustaining tubes and machines for breathing and maintaining your heart beat, antibiotics, and comfort measures, and medications. Your health care choices are your choices. You deserve to have your own desires acknowledged.

## **How Do You Start?**

No one lives forever. Immortality is unrealistic. We are all going to face declining health of self and even others in our lifetime. There may never be a comfortable time to think about end of life health care choices. Ask yourself, "If something happens and I cannot make health care decisions for myself, what do I want to do?" Learn about health care choices by reading materials focusing on hospice and long term care options. Think about who will make health care choices to follow your wishes and directives when you cannot do so. Be aware the Advance Directives are for all adults age 18 years or older, including mature minors and emancipated minors.

When the directive is completed, it should be placed in a convenient place for easy access. Make copies and distribute to your health care surrogate, your physician and other interested persons who should be apprised of your decisions. Encourage your family members, friends or those close to you to read, understand and honor your choices. Avoid placing the directive in your safe deposit box.

## **What are Some Components of the Advance Directive?**

- Health Care Surrogate; who will make your decisions when you can't
- Desired/undesired medical treatments
- Scope of physical comfort
- Life Sustaining treatments or not
- Organ donations ([www.lifesharing.org](http://www.lifesharing.org); [www.donatelifecalifornia.org/](http://www.donatelifecalifornia.org/))
- Final arrangements and disposition

## **What are some Advance Directive types for end of life care?**

- Advance Health Care Directive
- Five Wishes
- POLST: Physicians Order for Life Sustaining Treatment
- Living Wills
- Living Trust

### Why should you consider an Advance Directive?

- Contemplate your own end of life issues.
- Process your own end of life needs.
- Decide who you would like to make decisions for you if you are unwilling or unable to do so.
- Become more proactive in your own health wishes and desires.
- Communicate your desires, wishes and needs to others.
- Documented desires create less chance for miscommunication.

### Who can help you with the Advance Directive?

- All registered UCSD students who use Student Health Services are welcome to explore this needed document.
- Your PCP at UCSD Student Health Services (858-534-3300) can provide you with medical guidance to consider as you examine your own needs.
- The Clinical Social Worker/Case Manager at UCSD Student Health Services can also explain the different options and help you process your own needs. (858-246-0469)

### Where can you find additional resources?

- **Voicing My Choices:** [www.agingwithdignity.org](http://www.agingwithdignity.org) ; 850-681-2481. Has information for both children and adults dealing with life-limiting diagnoses.
- **California Advanced Directive:** [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org) ; 888-658-8898. Has a copy of the California Advanced Directive.
- **Legal Nature Advanced Directives:** <https://www.legalnature.com/categories/advance-healthcare-directive> ; 888-881-1139. Has Advanced Directive and Living Will forms.
- **California Hospital Association:** [www.calhospital.org](http://www.calhospital.org) ; 916-443-7401. Has information about the latest hospital issues and resolutions.
- **California Compassionate Care:** [www.capolst.org](http://www.capolst.org) ; 916-489-2222. Information regarding compassionate care in California.