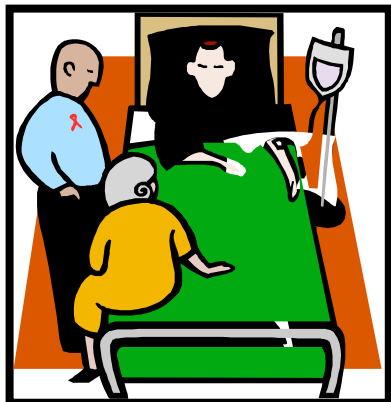


KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



When you are **SERIOUSLY** ill you have a **RIGHT** to:

1. Know about your medical problem.
2. Be told about your illness in a language you best understand.
3. Know what tests and treatments may be needed.
4. Know what the doctor thinks can be done to improve your health.
5. Know what the risks may be if you choose specific treatments.
6. Know what the risks may be if you refuse certain treatments.

Information &
Education are your
Best Protection

What are Health Care Directives?

They are instructions *you* write.

1. They tell doctors, family & friends what kind of care you want or do not want when you are *seriously* ill.
2. Your wishes are followed **ONLY** when you **are very sick & will not get better**.

They are legal documents

1. **No** attorney is needed.
2. Doctors must follow your wishes (directives).
3. You make your own decisions until you become too sick to make them for yourself.
4. **Then**, Doctors must follow your directives (wishes).

Why are advanced directives important?

1. Advanced Directives are like life insurance.
2. They protect your wishes for what you want when there is no chance you will get better.
3. If your family knows your wishes, it helps lessen their stress.

Who Makes Sure that My Medical Instructions are Followed?

1. You pick a person to represent you. This person is called your **AGENT**.
2. Pick a person you trust.
3. Pick a person you know will honor your decisions & respect your wishes. (person can be deaf or hearing)



It is Very Important to Discuss your Directives with the Person You Pick (your Agent) and with Your Family

Elinor & her daughters

Elinor was 85 years old and had two daughters. Elinor recently had a serious stroke and was in a coma. The doctor said, "If I do not put a feeding tube into your mother's stomach, she will die. Inserting a feeding tube requires surgery. The daughter's argued about what to do. One daughter wanted her mother to receive hospice care and be made comfortable until she died a natural death **A story**:. The other daughter disagreed. She said, "If mom dies I will feel guilty and responsible for her death."

A hospice nurse met with the daughters. She asked them, "Did you ever discuss your mother's wishes with her?" The daughter's stopped arguing and said. "Yes." "And what did she say?" "She said, 'When the time comes I know you will make the right decision.'"

If Elinor had discussed her wishes before she had a stroke, her daughters would not be arguing and worrying about what to do.

Stories from *Choices at the End of Life* by Linda Norlander, RN, MS, and Kerstin McSteen, RN, MS

A story: Wally & his family

Wally was eager to talk about his health care directives. He just finished radiation therapy for throat cancer. He knew his cancer was serious. He wanted to write out his health directives (or living will). "Write it out so the doctors won't do anything special to keep me alive," he said. "I just want to be comfortable."

Over the years, Wally had talked with his children and told them what he wanted, "I've lived a good life and I'm not afraid to die. I don't want any of those young doctors doing anything to keep me alive."

Wally's cancer got worse and he lost his ability to swallow. His doctor suggested a feeding tube. Wally told the doctor, "If you're giving me the choice between the slow way with this feeding thing or the fast way, I want the fast one."

Wally's wife, children and grandchildren supported him. They knew he did not want the feeding tube.

What are the biggest differences between these two

If you have questions, you can call your state's hospice organization

Go to www.partnershipforcaring.org

Or, E-mail the Minnesota Deaf Hospice Education Project at: dhep@mm.com

or write to:
Deaf Hospice Education Project
4712 15th Avenue South,

Words that mean the same:

- Representative
- Agent
- Surrogate
- Proxy
- Durable medical power of attorney

More words that mean the same:

- Living will
- Health care directive
- Advanced directive