

Delton Medical Center

Questions and Answers about Advance Directives

What is an *advance directive*?

An advance directive is a written document in which you specify what type of medical care you want in the future, or who you want to make decisions for you, should you lose the ability to make decisions for yourself.

Why is there a need for advance directives?

Years ago, most individuals died in their own homes. Today, there is greater chance of dying in a hospital or nursing home.

Expanding technology has increased the treatment choices we face, and improved public health has increased life expectancy. Decisions may have to be made concerning our care at a time we can no longer communicate our wishes.

What are the advantages of having an advance directive?

We each have our own values, wishes, and goals. Having an advance directive provides you some assurance your personal wishes concerning medical and mental treatment will be honored at a time when you are not able to express them. Having an advance directive may also prevent the need for a guardianship imposed through the probate court.

Must I have an advance directive?

No. The decision to have an advance directive is purely voluntary. No family member, hospital, or insurance company can force you to have one, or dictate what the document should say if you decide to write one. A hospital or nursing home or hospice organization cannot deny you service because you do or don't have an advance directive.

Are there different types of advance directives?

Yes. Three types are a durable power of attorney for health care, a living will, and a do-not-resuscitate declaration.

There is also a [declaration of anatomical gift](#), to take effect when you die.

Can I have more than one type of advance directive?

Yes. You may choose to have any number of advance directives, or to have none at all.

To learn more go to www.michbar.org/elderlaw/adpamphlet.cfm