



A FEW HELPFUL DEFINITIONS

Advance Directive - A general term that describes two kinds of legal documents: Living Wills and Medical Powers of Attorney. These documents allow a person to receive and give instructions about future medical care should the patient be unable to participate in medical decisions due to serious illness or incapacity. These differ in each state, so be sure you get the one for your state.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation - Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is a group of treatments used when someone's heart and/or breathing stops. CPR is used in an attempt to restart the heart and breathing. It may consist only of mouth-to-mouth breathing or it can include pressing on the chest to mimic the heart's function and cause blood to circulate. Electric shock and drugs also are used frequently to stimulate the heart.

Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) Order - A DNR order is a physician's written order instructing healthcare providers not to attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) in case of cardiac or respiratory arrest. A person with a valid DNR order will not be given CPR under these circumstances. Although the DNR order is written at the request of a person or his or her family, it must be signed by a physician to be valid. A non-hospital DNR order is written for individuals who are at home and do not want to receive CPR.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) - A group of governmental and private agencies that provide emergency care, usually to persons outside of healthcare facilities; EMS personnel generally include paramedics, first responders and other ambulance crew.

Hospice - Considered to be the model for quality, compassionate care for people facing a life-limiting illness or injury, hospice and palliative care involve a team-oriented approach to expert medical care, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support expressly tailored to the person's needs and wishes. Support is provided to the patient's family as well..

Intubation - Refers to the insertion of a tube through the mouth or nose into the trachea (windpipe) to create and maintain an open airway to assist breathing.

Life-sustaining Treatment - Treatments (medical procedures) that replace or support an essential bodily function (may also be called life support treatments). Life-sustaining treatments



include cardiopulmonary resuscitation, mechanical ventilation, artificial nutrition and hydration, dialysis, and other treatments.

Living Will - A type of advance directive in which an individual documents his or her wishes about medical treatment should he or she be at the end of life and unable to communicate. It may also be called a “directive to physicians”, “healthcare declaration,” or “medical directive.”

Mechanical Ventilation - Mechanical ventilation is used to support or replace the function of the lungs. A machine called a ventilator (or respirator) forces air into the lungs. The ventilator is attached to a tube inserted in the nose or mouth and down into the windpipe (or trachea).

Medical Power of Attorney - A document that allows an individual to appoint someone else to make decisions about his or her medical care if he or she is unable to communicate. This type of advance directive may also be called a healthcare proxy, durable power of attorney for healthcare or appointment of a healthcare agent. The person appointed may be called a healthcare agent, surrogate, attorney-in-fact or proxy.

Palliative Care - Specialized medical care for people living with a serious illness. This type of care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of the illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient, caregivers and the family. The goal is to achieve the best quality of life available to the patient by controlling pain and symptoms.

Power of Attorney – A legal document allowing one person to act in a legal matter on another’s behalf regarding to financial or real estate transactions.

Respiratory Arrest - The cessation of breathing - an event in which an individual stops breathing. If breathing is not restored, an individual's heart eventually will stop beating, resulting in cardiac arrest.

Ventilator – A ventilator, also known as a respirator, is a machine that pushes air into the lungs through a tube placed in the trachea (breathing tube). Ventilators are used when a person cannot breathe on his or her own or cannot breathe effectively enough to provide adequate oxygen to the cells of the body or rid the body of carbon dioxide.