

U.S. Living Will Registry

Free National Registration

UW Medicine

VALLEY
MEDICAL CENTER

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Advance Directives

You have the right to make your own healthcare decisions. Very often these decisions are made together with your family and the advice of your doctor. It's usually best to include family and physicians in this process to avoid conflict when end-of-life decisions arise: family members may have personal beliefs that differ from yours and physicians may give insight to end-of-life issues not previously considered.

How to Assure Your Choices will be Honored

Before you become ill, make your choices known by completing an advance directive and relieve your family of difficult decisions. The most common types of advance directives are:

1. **Health Care Directive** (also known as a *Living Will* or *Directive to Physicians*)
2. **Mental Health Advance Directive**
3. **Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)**
4. **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**

Health Care Directive

The Health Care Directive is applicable when a person is terminally ill and may need life support. You and two witnesses, who are not related to you and will not inherit anything from you, must sign this document. You may change or cancel this directive at any time.

Mental Health Advance Directive

The Mental Health Advance Directive is similar to the traditional Advance Directive for Health Care. This directive may cover a range of mental health topics. It names another person authorized to make decisions on behalf of the patient. It may also provide the patient's instruction for hospitalization, alternatives, medications, therapies, etc.

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

The Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment form is a 'portable' physician orders form that describes your wishes

in the event your heart stops. It summarizes your wishes regarding life-sustaining treatment and can go with you from one healthcare setting to another. It includes the following: your wishes for resuscitation, medical interventions, antibiotics and artificial feedings. www.doh.wa.gov 2013

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care

The Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care is a legal document allowing you to name a person as your Health Care Agent, someone who is authorized to consent to care, stop treatment or refuse treatment for you if a physician determines you cannot make these decisions for yourself. The person you choose to be your Health Care Agent should be a trusted family member or friend with whom you have discussed your values and medical treatment choices. Washington state law requires that this directive be notarized and/or witnessed. You may change or cancel this directive at any time.

Conveying Your Wishes

It is the practice of Valley Medical Center to perform CPR on every patient whose heart stops suddenly, unless there is a pre-existing advance directive.

It's very important to let your physician and loved ones know your wishes for treatment should you ever be unable to make decisions for yourself. Completing your advance directive is your first step to making your decisions known.

Upon completion of the documents, you should:

1. Provide copies to your Health Care Agent, named in your Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, your family and/or surrogate decision maker.
2. Provide copies to your physician(s) to include in your medical record.
3. File documents with the U.S. Living Will Registry, the best way to make sure your documents are available and accessible when they are needed. Mail them to: U.S. Living Will Registry, 523 Westfield Avenue, Box 2789, Westfield, NJ 07091-2789
4. Keep your POLST form on your refrigerator or in a designated place where family and medics can locate it quickly.

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U.S. Living Will Registry

The U.S. Living Will Registry electronically stores advance directives, organ donor and emergency contact information and makes them available 24 hours a day to healthcare providers across the country through an automated computer-facsimile system. Because only healthcare providers have access to the documents, privacy and confidentiality are maintained.

You can register and submit your documents with the U.S. Living Will Registry by signing a Registration Agreement. Your documents are then electronically stored in the Registry's computer.

You are sent confirmation of the registration and will receive labels to affix to your insurance card and driver's license, stating that your advance directive is registered. Healthcare providers can then contact the Registry to retrieve the documents. This is a free service, compliments of Valley Medical Center.

What to Do with Your Advance Directive Forms

Store your advance directives with the U.S. Living Will Registry by completing one of the two actions below.

If you have an existing advance directive, obtain a copy (keep your original) and attach it to the completed registration agreement. Mail your existing directive(s) and the registration agreement to the U.S. Living Will Registry in the envelope provided.

If you do not have an advance directive, or you wish to change your existing directives, complete the applicable form(s), including the registration agreement and mail copies to the U.S. Living Will Registry in the envelope provided.

If you have questions or need assistance filling out these forms please call 425.226.4653.

For More Information

U.S. Living Will

uslivingwillregistry.com 1.800.LIV.WILL (548.9455)

Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/IllnessandDisease/
PhysiciansOrdersforLifeSustainingTreatment.aspx