

Shaker Place Rehabilitation and Nursing Center

End of Life Planning Information Advance Directives

It is not uncommon for people to enter the last stages of life without having made decisions about their end of life care. New York state law grants a person the right to accept or reject medical treatment. Throughout the course of life, you may have discussed your wishes with your physician, family, or friends. When the time comes, however, to make decisions on your behalf these discussions may not have been enough to legally convey your wishes. While there is no requirement that you execute any kind of Advance Directive, in order to make your wishes officially recognized, you may want to consider completing some form of Advance Directive. While the completion of an Advance Directive is entirely optional, it is the one way to ensure your wishes are recognized.

In the State of New York, there are a number of legal requirements that must be met in order for a person's wishes to be recognized and followed by health care professionals. A complete overview of those New York requirements can be found in "ADVANCE DIRECTIVES: Making Your Wishes Known And Honored," a publication from the office of the New York State Attorney General. To obtain a copy of this report you may do so by visiting: <https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/advancedirectives.pdf>.

In New York, there are five types of legally recognized Advance Directives. Those are:

- **MOLST**
- **A Health Care Proxy**
- **A Living Will**
- **A Living Will with a Health Care Proxy**
- **A Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR)**

MOLST form: Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment allows doctors to record your preferences regarding cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), mechanical intervention, and other life sustaining treatments on one form as a physician order. It must be completed by a health care professional and signed by a New York State licensed physician to be valid.

You can complete a Health Care Proxy if you are 18 years old or older. The Health Care Proxy allows you to appoint someone you trust to serve as your health care agent. This is the person who will make your health care decisions on your behalf when you are no longer able to do so. The Proxy becomes invoked when your physician determines you



no longer have the capacity to make decisions for yourself. Decisions that pertain to withdrawing or withholding life sustaining treatment require the concurrence of a second physician. If you have not designated a Health Care Proxy and wish to do so you may contact a member of the Facility's Social Service staff for assistance.

A Living Will is a written declaration of your health care wishes. In New York, there are not statutes governing Living Wills and there is no standard Living Will form. A Living Will offers you the opportunity to leave specific instructions about your medical treatment when you are no longer able to make those decisions. The Facility highly recommends consulting with an attorney if you choose to execute a Living Will.

A Living Will with a Health Care Proxy offers you the ability to both state your wishes as well as appoint someone to carry out those wishes. A Living Will does offer the opportunity to specify care instructions and offer guidance regarding your wishes. Specific instructions that you may include in your Living Will cannot be altered by your proxy. It is recommended that you also thoroughly discuss your wishes with your designated Proxy to avoid future complications or questions about your care.

A **DNR (Do Not Resuscitate Order)** instructs medical professionals not to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as an emergency treatment to restart your heart or lungs when your heartbeat or breathing stops. This means that doctors, nurses, or emergency medical personnel will not initiate any emergency procedure such as mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, external chest compression, electric shock, insertion of an airway tube, or injection of medication into the heart or open chest. If you desire a DNR order you may express your wishes in your Health Care Proxy designation form, your Living Will, or a State approved MOLST (medical orders for life sustaining treatment) form. You may contact a member of the Social Service staff for assistance in completing a MOLST form if you so choose. If you do have the capacity to make your own decisions you can also give your consent for a DNR order verbally or in writing to your physician.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding end of life planning, Shaker Place Rehabilitation and Nursing Center please feel free to seek assistance from a member of the Social Service staff or our Pastoral Care Director.

For additional information regarding health care decisions you may also want to reference the Information Sheet regarding the New York State Family Health Care Decisions Act which is also found in your Admission Packet.

August 2015

Reviewed: December 2017

