



## What are Advance Directives?

### Advance Directives are...

Advance directives are spoken or legal written plans. They give information about the medical care you prefer. These plans are made ahead of time in case you become unable to make choices for yourself. With these plans, you can make choices when you are able to think clearly about your wishes, use good judgment, and talk to others. Advance directives can be used for any medical decision. These would be for the treatments you want. They also can state if you want to be an organ donor.

Having an advance directive is **recommended for any independent adult age 18 and older**. This is most important so you can state your wishes about medical care before a serious injury or illness occurs.

- An Advance Directive **does not** mean “Do not treat.”
- Discuss with your provider the type of health care that may be needed when faced with a serious illness or injury.

### Why are Advance Directives important?

- You have a right to help make choices about your own health.
- Planning and writing your advance directives helps you control your health care.
- It is best to have your wishes written down.
- Without this plan, certain treatments may be given even if you do not want them.
- Your spouse, adult children, or parents will be able to carry out your wishes better.
- It may make it easier for them to cope with your illness or injury.

### Where can I find out more?

- Iowa Department for Elder Affairs  
Phone 1-800-532-3213.  
[www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs](http://www.state.ia.us/elderaffairs)
- National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization  
Phone 1-800-658-8898  
[www.caringinfo.org/UserFiles/File/Iowa.pdf](http://www.caringinfo.org/UserFiles/File/Iowa.pdf)

### Where to get forms for Advance Directives:

- **Five Wishes** can be used in over 40 states, including Iowa. It is written in everyday words. It helps patients discuss this subject with their physician. Phone 1-888-594-7437.  
[www.agingwithdignity.org/](http://www.agingwithdignity.org/)
- Iowa Medical Society, Des Moines, IA  
[www.iowamedical.org/legal/advancedirectives.cfm](http://www.iowamedical.org/legal/advancedirectives.cfm)
- Pastoral Services office at Mercy Medical Center
- Your lawyer
- Internet web sites that allow free printing of legal documents