Honoring Choices® MINNESOTA
An initiative of the Twin Cities Medical Society

Advance Care Planning Information: General Guide

Ridgeview MEDICAL CENTER

This was provided by Ridgeview Medical Center. If you need more information or would like to meet with someone please call 952-777-5098. This is a FREE service.

Advance Care Planning
Knowing your voice is heard when making decisions about health care is important. Advance Care Planning is the process of preparing for a time when you may not be able to make your own medical decisions. The best time to make these decisions is when you are able to make your own choices.

Health Care Agent
Discussing and sharing your wishes with your loved ones, health care team and health care agent is important. A health care agent makes health care decisions based on your wishes if you are unable to communicate.

Health Care Directive By writing a Health Care Directive, you can make your voice heard so your wishes are followed. A Health Care Directive is a written plan outlining your values and priorities for your future medical treatment.

The process of advance care planning (ACP) involves conversations throughout life about your values, beliefs and goals for future health care. ACP conversations focus on your health care goals and what is important to you.

- As you get older, goals, values and priorities often change. Your health status may change, too. Revisiting your decisions and plans regularly is important.
- Give yourself and others peace of mind. Plan ahead while you are able.

Documenting your wishes in a Health Care Directive is important. The document outlines your values and priorities for future medical treatment and can identify your health care agent. A Health Care Directive limits confusion and helps everyone prepare for the unexpected.

Getting started

Start by thinking about what is most important to you. Talk with your loved ones to share your thoughts. Even if you feel close to loved ones, they may not know what you would want unless you tell them. The goal of ACP is to help others understand what health care choices you would make if you could not communicate.

Choosing a health care agent

Choosing a health care agent is key to planning ahead. Your health care agent is the person who will speak for you if you are unable to make decisions for yourself. To choose the best person to be your health care agent, ask yourself:

- Do I trust this person to be able to make tough decisions?
- Will this person honor my wishes even if he or she does not agree with my wishes?
- Can this person make important decisions under stressful situations?
- Can this person stand up for me even if family members or others disagree?
- Is this person likely to be available in case of an emergency?

Completing a Health Care Directive

Do I need a lawyer to complete my Health Care Directive?
No, as long as you meet these legal requirements:

- You must be at least 18 years old, and able to understand and communicate your wishes
- Your directive must be in writing, state your full name, be signed by you and dated
- Your directive must list 1 or both of the following: a named health care agent, and health care or treatment instructions
- In Minnesota, your signature on your directive must be witnessed by 2 adults or a notary public
  - » Neither of the 2 adults can be your agent. Only 1 of the adults can work for your health care organization.
  - » Witness requirements vary state to state. If you complete a directive in another state, check the state requirements.

When is my Health Care Directive used?
As long as you can make your own choices, you control your own medical care.

If you cannot make choices for yourself, your health care team will follow your wishes as described in your Health Care Directive and as your health care agent directs. Be sure to give copies of your Health Care Directive to your health care team and your health care agent.

Will my Health Care Directive be valid in other states?
Every state has its own requirements for a Health Care Directive. Many states honor a Health Care Directive created in another state.

Keep a copy of your Health Care Directive with you when you travel. If you spend a lot of time in another state, check on that state's requirements for a Health Care Directive.

Where can I find a Health Care Directive form?
You can get a Health Care Directive form by:

- Contacting Ridgeview Medical Center, Honoring Choices Program, **952-777-5098.**
- Calling Honoring Choices at **612-362-3704**
- Visiting **HonoringChoices.org**

Many people easily complete the Health Care Directive on their own. If you want help completing the form, talk to your health care team or contact Honoring Choices. Specially trained advance care planning facilitators are available to help you.

Where should I keep my completed Health Care Directive?
Keep your signed and completed original Health Care Directive in a safe, easily available place at home. Give copies to your:

- Health care agent
- Family members or other loved ones who are likely to be involved in your health care
- Primary care clinician or health care team
- Local hospital

Learn more with advance care planning resources

Many resources to support ACP are available. Various websites offer recommended books and articles, tips to start conversations with loved ones and more. Websites to visit include:

- **Ridgeview Medical Center**
  To search for upcoming information sessions and events go to **http://health.ridgeviewmedical.org/Events**

  Ridgeview also has ACP facilitators who will meet with you for free. To schedule time to meet with someone please call **952-777-5098**.

- **Honoring Choices**
  HonoringChoices.org
  - » Speakers are available to give free presentations to groups on ACP
  - » ACP facilitators are available to provide free one-on-one sessions to help with ACP

For more information about advance care planning or for help creating a Health Care Directive, contact your health care team or Honoring Choices Minnesota.

HonoringChoices.org

612-362-3704