



# Advance Directives

## **Who Needs an Advance Directive?**

Everyone should have an Advance Directive. Illinois law allows four types of Advance Directives: a Power Of Attorney for Health Care, a Living Will, a Mental Health Treatment Preference Declaration, and a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)/Practitioner Orders For Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST). You may decide to make more than one Advance Directive.

## **What's the Difference in the Advance Directives?**

The Power Of Attorney for Health Care lets you choose someone to make health care decisions for you in the future, if you are no longer able to make these decisions for yourself. You are referred to as the “principal” and the person you choose to make decisions is your “agent”.

A Living Will tells your health care professional whether you want death-delaying procedures used if you have a terminal condition and are unable to state your wishes. A living will only applies if you have a terminal condition.

A Mental Health Treatment Preference Declaration lets you say if you want to receive certain treatments when you have a mental illness and are unable to make these decisions for yourself.

A Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)/Practitioner Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) (DNR/POLST Order) is an advance directive in which you choose whether you want cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or not; it can also be used to record your desires for life-sustaining treatment.

## **What if I do not have a completed IDPH DNR form?**

Without written documentation to the contrary, all outpatients at our hospital will be resuscitated to the best of our abilities and do not need to fill out any additional forms.

If, at any time, you wish to be treated as a DNR patient and do not have a DNR order in effect, your procedure or test will be cancelled and you will be referred to your physician for further discussion.

## **How Does the Advance Directive Work?**

As a patient coming to our hospital for services, you will be asked if you have an Advance Directive. If so, you will be asked to provide a copy of it for the staff to inform them of your wishes. The copy of your Advance Directive will be filed in your medical record. Unless we have a written Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order from the patient's physician, we will attempt to resuscitate a patient in cardiac or respiratory arrest. A valid DNR/POLST Order form can serve as that written order if it is signed by a physician.

In any case when a patient is treated as a DNR, that person's dignity and worth will continue to be acknowledged and valued. Assertive comfort measures will be utilized. No resuscitation efforts will be administered, but death will not be hastened.

## **What if I Do Not Have a Completed Advance Directive?**

Without written documentation to the contrary, all patients at our hospital will be resuscitated to the best of our abilities. If you want to be a "full code" with all attempts made to resuscitate you in an emergency, you do not need to fill out any additional forms.

## **How Do I Complete An Advance Directive?**

Advance Directive forms can be executed without an attorney. Contact the hospital's Social Services Department for assistance. They will have the appropriate forms or you may download them at [sih.net](http://sih.net).

This information is only for your understanding. This is a very personal decision that requires you to think about it in advance.