



Advance Directives

WHAT ARE ADVANCE DIRECTIVES?

Advance Directives is the general term given to forms such as Durable Powers of Attorney for Healthcare and Living Wills. They allow you to make your own healthcare choices even if you become so ill that you cannot speak for yourself. In Georgia, the Power of Attorney for Healthcare and Living Will have been combined into one form called the Georgia Advance Directive for Healthcare.

Every state has laws about advance directives. Advance directives from one state will be honored by any other state unless there are specific provisions in conflict with those state laws. For example, some states' durable power of attorney forms allow the agent to decide about organ donation, and others do not.

When you complete the advance directive, keep the original copy in your own files and give copies to close family and friends who are likely to be there for you. Also give copies to your doctors and bring a copy to the hospital.

When you come into the hospital, the staff must ask if you have any type of advance directive for healthcare. You will be encouraged to complete this document if you have not already done so. The advance directive allows you to name a trusted person – a family member or friend – known as a “health care agent” who will agree to make sure your healthcare wishes are honored if you ever become physically or mentally unable to make your own decisions. You can also describe the kind of end-of life treatment you would like to have when there is no reasonable hope of recovery.

SIXTY PLUS SERVICES

For more information, call our helpline at **404.605.3867**.

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WHAT IS AN “ALLOW NATURAL DEATH” ORDER?

Having an advance directive does not mean you have completed an “Allow Natural Death” order. An allow natural death (AND) order is a specific doctor’s order that directs medical personnel NOT to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if a patient’s heart or breathing stops. Without an AND order, hospital staff will use whatever means necessary to help a patient whose breathing or heart has stopped. If you want your doctor to write an AND order while you are in the hospital, you must be very specific about your request. An AND order must be re-written for each hospital admission, because it does not follow a patient once they go home. (There is a provision in Georgia law for an AND order at home, but you should discuss that with your doctor if that is what you desire.)

SHOULD I HAVE AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

Yes, even if you are in good health, you should consider having an advance directive. An accident or serious illness can happen to anyone at any time. If you have an advance directive, your wishes will be known and are more likely to be followed.

HOW CAN I WRITE AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

The Hospital’s Patient Relations Department can provide you with forms for a Georgia Advance Directive for Health Care. You may also obtain them from your own attorney. The American Hospital Association sponsors a website containing a link to download and print advance directive forms for any state. Go to putitinwriting.org and click on the side-bar that says “Advance Directives for Your State.”

Advance directives are not complicated legal documents. You may want to ask your doctor or your attorney to review your documents to ensure your directives are understood exactly as you have intended. When you are satisfied with your directives, you must sign them in the presence of two witnesses – friends, neighbors, co-workers.

The witnesses cannot be hospital employees who are directly caring for you (doctor, nurse, therapist), but one of the witnesses may be a hospital employee not directly involved in your care such as a patient representative, chaplain or unit clerk. The other witness must be someone would not knowingly expect any financial benefit from your death. Copies should be given to your family and your physician.

CAN I CHANGE MY ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

You may change or revoke your advance directive at any time. Make sure that your family members and physician are aware of the changes to your advance directive. Every bit as important as creating legal documents is having honest conversations with your doctor and family members. Don’t leave them guessing about what is important to you regarding health care decisions. We often say, “The conversation is as important as the piece of paper.”

CAN I FILL OUT AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE TODAY?

Yes, the Patient Relations Department will help answer any questions you may have about advance directives and can help facilitate the process. You may ask your nurse or any information clerk to contact the Patient Relations Department or you may call them at **404.605.3692**.

Other ways for obtaining advance directive forms are to email **Sixty_Plus.Email@piedmont.org**, visit Sixty Plus Services – Lobby Level of the 35 Building on the Piedmont Atlanta Hospital campus or to download a copy from one of the following websites.

Piedmont Atlanta Hospital
piedmonthospital.org

Georgia Division of Aging Services
aging.dhr.georgia.gov