Advance Directives
Who will speak for you...
If you can’t speak for yourself?
Would they know what to say?

A gift you give your family and friends.
Advance Directives can help your family and medical team in a medical emergency.

- They are only used when you can’t speak for yourself
- Everyone should have Advance Directives

Advance Directives in Connecticut have two parts

**Part 1**

A **health care representative** is a person whom you authorize, in writing, to make any and all health care decisions on your behalf if you are not able to speak for yourself. This includes the decision whether to withhold or withdraw life support systems.

A health care representative does not act unless you are unable to make or communicate your decisions about your medical care.

**Part 2**

A **living will** is a document that states your healthcare wishes. A living will only speaks to a time in the future when you are unable to make and communicate decisions for yourself and you are approaching death and/or permanently unconscious.

Your living will will also help your family, friends and physicians know whether you want life support systems/machines to keep you alive or whether you do not want to receive such treatments, even if the result is your death.

You have the right to make health care decisions about the medical care you receive.

If you do not want certain treatments, you have the right to tell your physicians you do not want them and have your wishes followed.

You also have the right to receive information from your physicians to assist you in reaching a decision about what medical care is to be provided to you.

There may come a time when you are unable to actively participate in determining your treatment due to serious illness, injury or other disability. At that time, your Health Care Representative will work with the physicians to help make decisions in your care that you would have wanted.

**Preparing Advance Directives** begins with thinking about what’s important to you

- About your healthcare
- About your life and how you want to live
- About what gives you joy and gives your life meaning

**Tips to get started:**

What are your values, wishes, beliefs about your care and specific medical procedures?

- You can start out by writing down what is important to you
- You can have a practice conversation with someone you trust

Sometimes you can start with filling in this sentence:

“What matters most to me is ____________________________”

- How important is living on your own and caring for yourself?
- How important is your ability to communicate?
Common Questions:
Do I need an attorney to help me with this?
• No, an attorney is not required to complete advance directive forms.
What do I need to complete an advance directive?
• The forms are located in the back of this packet
• You will need two people to witness your signature; your witnesses should not be the same as the person named as your Healthcare Representative.

Where are you in the Advance Directive process?
Review these statements and mark the one that best matches you:

New
❑ I’ve never thought about my own advance directives ...
• What are they?
• Why do I need them?

Thinking
❑ I am thinking about ...
• What is important to me
• My values, wishes, beliefs about my medical care and specific medical procedures
• I am not sure what to do
• I am worried about how to talk about it
• I keep putting it off; I am too busy to prioritize it

Action
❑ I am ready to take action on my advance directive
• I will learn about different medical procedures and what they can or can’t do
• I will talk with the person I would like to be my Healthcare Representative (HCR) and share my wishes
• I will talk with my doctor about my wishes
• I will talk with my family about my wishes and tell them who I will appoint to be my HCR

Completion
❑ I am ready to complete my written advance directive
• I will complete a Healthcare Representative form and give a copy to my Healthcare Representative and my Primary Care Provider or other specialists
• I will complete a Living Will and give a copy of my Living Will to my Healthcare Representative and my Primary Care Provider or other specialist

Review
❑ I will review my advance directives to see if they need to be updated or revised
• I have completed advance directives but I have not reviewed them in years
• I have had a change in my life that changes my advance directive, so I need to update them
• I have completed advance directives and review them with my Primary Care Provider every year at my physical
Talk to your Primary Care Provider or other specialist

State of Connecticut Attorney General’s Office
You may visit the State of Connecticut Attorney General’s Office website for copies of Advance Directives.

http://www.ct.gov/ag/cwp/browse.asp?a=2130&bc=0&c=19278

Faith Community
For many people, advance care planning brings up spiritual questions. Your faith community or clergy member can serve as excellent resources.

Care Decisions Connecticut
www.caredecisionsct.org

PREPARE
is a website that uses videos and stories to teach people how to identify their values and goals for medical care and to make medical decisions.

www.prepareforyourcare.org

Videos
Five Steps of Advance Care Planning
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPtu-FpY1Kw&list=PLfYfqEyw9caQqt9ZcAN4ca5tQ5x_hLH&index=4

NHDD Speak Up Video
https://youtu.be/Bar0qZTUGdw?list=PLfYfqEyw9caQqt9ZcAN4ca5tQ5x_hLH

Begin the Conversation NHDD
https://youtu.be/uPDpfmdhwqs?list=PLfYfqEyw9caQqt9ZcAN4ca5tQ5x_hLH