

You have the right to make informed decisions about the medical and health care you receive. If you do not want certain treatments, you have the right to tell your provider you do not want them and have your wishes followed. You also have the right to have certain treatments provided to you. You should tell your provider you want them and your wishes should be followed.

You have the right to receive information from your provider 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. You have the right to appoint someone to speak for you when you cannot speak for yourself.

This information will discuss the options available in Connecticut to help you to provide written instructions to guide your physician, family and others as to the medical treatment choices you desire to be made if you cannot express your wishes.

### **The right to information needed to make health care decisions**

Your provider is responsible to provide you with information that can help you make decisions about your health care. Your provider will explain:

- What treatments may help you;
- How each treatment may affect you, how it can help you and what, if any, serious problems or side effects the treatment is likely to cause;
- What may happen if you decide not to receive treatment.

Your provider may also recommend what, if any, treatment is medically appropriate, but the final decision is yours to make. All of this information is provided so you can exercise your right to decide the treatment that best fits your lifestyle, values and beliefs.

### **Definition of Advance Directive**

An Advance Directive is a legal document which states your directions or expresses your preferences about your medical care. Your Advance Directive can choose someone to act on your behalf. Physicians and other providers use them when you are unable to communicate your decisions about your medical treatment.

An Advance Directive is prepared before any condition or circumstance occurs that causes you to be unable to actively make a decision about your medical care. This includes a living will, healthcare representative and organ donation.

You are not required to have an Advance Directive. No one can deny you care if you do not have one.



### Living Wills

A living will is a document that states your wishes regarding any kind of health care you want to receive. Should you be in a terminal condition or permanently unconscious, the living will can also tell your provider whether you want “life support systems” to keep you alive or whether you do not want to receive such treatment even if it means your death. A living will only goes into effect when you are unable to make or communicate your decisions about your medical care.

A living will does not affect the requirement that your provider give you pain medication or other care designed to maintain your physical comfort.

A living will or any other document can be revoked by you at any time.

### What is a Conservator?

A “conservator of the person” is a Probate Court appointment, when a person is no longer capable of caring for himself/herself including the inability to make decisions about medical care. The conservator of the person is responsible for making sure that the health and safety needs of the conserved person are taken care of and generally has the power to give consent for medical treatment and services. You can name this person in advance so that if the time came when you can no longer make decisions the Probate Court will know who you would like to speak for you. If a conservator is appointment that person must follow your health care instructions, as expressed either in writing or verbally as communicated to the conservator. Any written advance directives cannot be revoked by your conservator without a court order.

### Creating an Advance Directive

- You do not need a lawyer or a notary public to prepare these documents.
- If you chose to fill out the optional form you will need to have this notarized.
- You do need to have two witnesses to be present when you sign the document and then they need to sign the document.
- Your health care representative cannot sign as a witness on these documents.

### What do I do once I complete the Advance Directive documents

Give a copy to:

- Your Provider
- Your Healthcare Representative
- Anyone else who you feel may need to make your wishes known, for example family, friends, clergy, and/or lawyer