

## Advance Directive

**Purpose:** Advance Directives are documents that state your choices about medical treatment or name someone to make decisions about your medical treatment if you are unable to make these decisions about your medical treatment, or if you are unable to make these decisions or choices yourself.

*New Mexico law recognizes two (2) types of Advance Directives:*

**Instructions for Health Care (Living Will):** A legal document that conveys the health care decisions of an individual in the event he/she becomes terminally ill or incapable of communicating.

**Power of Attorney for Health Care:** A legal document which allows you (the principal) to appoint another person (the “attorney-in-fact” or “agent”) to make medical or health care decisions, if you should become temporarily or permanently unable to make those decisions yourself.

**NOTE:** If you appoint your spouse and then become divorced, the appointment of your spouse as your agent is revoked.

Each patient or their representative will be asked by the Registration Interviewer if he or she has a valid advance directive or if they have a copy for their medical record. This copy will become a part of the permanent medical record.

At admission, the patient or their representative will be given a pamphlet on Medical Decisions, which contains information on advance directives and how to complete them if they should so desire.

Advance directive forms are available through the Registration Department.

What is required?

- The existence of or desire to create an advance directive must be determined for all adult patients.
- Assistance/information must be provided to all who want to create an advance directive.
- A patient’s healthcare preferences may be documented in the patient’s medical record in the absence of an advance directive and in accordance with state law.
- All healthcare professionals must honor what is expressed in an advance directive within the limits of the law and the facility’s capabilities.

How to comply:

- You will be asked whether you have an advance directive. If you do not, you will be provided with information.
- Your Advance Directive will be placed in the designated section of the medical record, and your physician will be made aware of it.
- If you do not have a copy of your advance directive, tell your nurse. You will be advised to create a new directive if a copy cannot be produced.
- If you want to change or cancel an advance directive, be sure it is done in writing and all of the copies of the advance directive are retrieved and recorded.
- Interested parties can find information/documents on Advance Directives in our **Patient Registration Department**.