

# Advance Directives for patients 18 years of age and older

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**NOTE TO PATIENTS AND PARENTS:** By law, we need to ask anyone 18 years of age and older if they have an Advance Directive. If not, we will ask if they would like information on Advance Directives.

*If you are 18 years of age or older:*

- *You may choose to create an Advance Directive.*
- *If you choose to create one, this teaching sheet can give you basic information on how to go about it.*

## **What are Advance Directives?**

An Advance Directive is a legal way to make a decision about future medical care. A life threatening illness or injury can happen to anyone at any age. You can help control your care by recording your choices. The time to do this is before you are sick or injured

*Generally, you have the right to refuse medical or surgical care you do not want. Georgia law lets you create an Advance Directive so that your wishes will be followed.*

- This allows you to record your choices about medical treatment.
- This will also state who you want to make medical choices for you if you are too sick to do it on your own.

*As of July 1, 2007, the Georgia law about Advanced Directives changed.*

- *There is now only one legal form for Advance Directives. It has 4 parts.*
- *Before July 1, 2007, there were 2 separate forms. If you have a Living Will or Durable Power of Attorney from before this date, they are still legal and able to be used.*

## **What is an Advance Directive for Health Care?**

An advance directive lets you:

- Name another person (agent) to make medical choices for you when you are temporarily or permanently unable to make them yourself.
- List the medical care you do and do not want.

The 4 parts of the legal document need to be signed, dated and witnessed by 2 qualified witnesses. It can be used for any medical condition, not just a terminal illness. Georgia law has a form that can be used, but other forms are accepted if they meet hospital requirements.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Advanced Directives for patients 18 years and older, continued

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## Commonly asked questions

### Can an Advance Directive be changed?

You can make changes or even cancel your Advance Directive at any time. Even during treatment, you can cancel an Advance Directive. If you make any changes, be sure to destroy all of the old forms. You will also need to give a copy of the new form to your family and doctor. Let your doctor or nurse know as soon as you decide to make changes.

### Will an Advance Directive be honored in an emergency?

Yes, an Advance Directive will be honored if one is provided.

### Is there a time limit on how long my Advance Directive is valid?

No, but it is best to update your Advance Directive regularly. It will show that your choices are up to date.

### What if I am pregnant?

Instructions that would most likely **not** be followed are:

- Not giving treatment to keep you alive.
- Stop giving treatment to keep you alive.

### After I complete the Advance Directive, what do I do with it?

You should give copies to:

- Your family, minister or a close friend who would know if you are seriously ill or injured.
- Your doctor.
- Anyone you appoint to make health care decisions for you.
- A hospital, nursing facility, home health agency or hospice (a copy must go in your medical record in order for the Advance Directive to be honored).

### Will my Georgia Advance Directive be honored if I have treatment in a different state?

The laws honoring Advance Directives are different from state to state. The Georgia Advance Directive may or may not be valid in another state. Because an Advance Directive tells others your choices about health care, it can influence that care, no matter where you are treated. If you spend a great deal of time in more than one state, you should:

- Learn about the Advance Directive guidelines for each state.
- Sign an Advance Directive that meets all the guidelines for each state.

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### **Do I need to have a witness sign the forms?**

Yes. The 2 qualified witnesses must be **someone other than**:

- Persons directly involved with your healthcare.
- Persons who know that they will inherit or have financial gain.

### **Can I be refused admission to a hospital, nursing facility, home health agency or hospice program if I do not have an Advance Directive?**

No. Federal law says you cannot be refused admission because you do or do not have an Advance Directive.

### **Does Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta have a policy about Advance Directives?**

Yes, it is the policy of this hospital to honor a patient’s Advance Directive if it is in line with state law. We also respect your right to accept or reject offered medical or surgical treatment as long as the law permits it.

### **Where can I get forms for Advance Directives?**

At Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, speak with a Social Worker. The Social Worker will give you a copy of the Advance Directives (Georgia Advance Directive for Health Care form).

- Egleston: 404-785-6250
- Scottish Rite: 404-785-2010
- Hughes Spalding: 404-785-6250 (Stacie Cook)
- Ambulatory Services: 404-785-6250 (Stacie Cook)

You can also get a copy of the [Georgia Advance Directive for Health Care form](#) by calling or writing:

DHR – Aging Services  
Two Peachtree Street NW  
9<sup>th</sup> floor - Suite 9385  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303 - 3142  
Phone: 404-657-5258  
Fax: 404-657-5285  
Toll Free: 866-552-4464

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Georgia Hospital Association  
1675 Terrell Mill Road  
Marietta, Georgia 30067  
Phone: 770-249-4500  
[www.gha.org](http://www.gha.org)

Medical Association of Georgia  
1849 The Exchange  
Suite 200  
Atlanta, Georgia 30339  
Phone: 678-303-9290  
Toll Free: 800-282-0224  
[www.mag.org](http://www.mag.org)

## Should I carry something in my wallet about my Advance Directives?

Yes. If you have an Advance Directive, you may want to cut along the black line and carry this in your wallet.

Notice to Health Care Providers:	
I, _____,	have executed a:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Living Will <b>before</b> July 1, 2007
<input type="checkbox"/>	Durable Power of Attorney for health care <b>before</b> July 1, 2007
<input type="checkbox"/>	Advance Directive for Health Care <b>after</b> July 1, 2007 and have given a copy of such document(s) to:
Name:	_____
Phone:	_____
Address:	_____ _____
Name:	_____
Phone:	_____
Address:	_____ _____

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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