



# OBCCD ADVANCE HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVES

Orientation 2015

Reviewed for 2015

## **WHAT IS AN ADVANCE HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE?**

An advance health care directive puts your health care wishes in writing, informing your family and doctor of your wishes if you become unable to make decisions or communicate for yourself. An advance health care directive takes the pressure off loved ones-they don't have to guess what you would have wanted.



# An Advance Directive Has Three Parts:

- In the **First Part:**

- You name a person to be your agent.
- You also name an alternate in case your agent is unavailable.
- The agent legally makes decisions on your behalf in regards to health care – A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care.

- In the **Second Part:**

- You can detail medical treatments you would or would not want and under what circumstances.
  - Feeding tubes
  - Ventilators
  - What to do if your heart and breathing stop

- In the **Third Part:**

You can express your wishes about organ and tissue donation

# Think about it!

## Talk it over!

- Developing an Advance Directive involves thinking about what you would want for yourself and talking it over with those you trust.
- What would be your highest priority?
  - To be pain free.
  - To not be placed on a breathing machine.
  - To have everything done to keep you alive as long as possible, no matter what quality of life would be.



# Choosing an Agent:

- An agent must be 18 years of age and someone who knows you and who you believe will honor and respect your values and wishes even if they differ from their own. The agent you appoint may be a family member or a friend or even your attorney. It cannot be the owner or operator of a residential facility where you live or your health care provider, unless the person is related to you or is a co-worker.
- If you do not have anyone to appoint as an agent you can still complete the instructions for your care and this will provide your doctors with information to guide your care.

# Exactly what does my agent do?

- Your agent will make decisions for you just like you would if you could. (It is very important that your agent and you talk about things.)
- Your agent can choose your doctor, and where you receive your care, speak with your health care team, review your medical record and authorize its release, accept and refuse medical treatments and make arrangements for you when you die.



# Making it Legal

- An advance health care directive does not need to be prepared by an attorney, but does need to be properly signed and dated and either notarized or witnessed by two individuals who are not the agent or the alternate.
- Give copies to your doctor, your loved ones, and your agent.
- Keep the original in a safe place and have extra copies available for when you need to go into the hospital or have a home care agency involved in your care.

# Extra Information

- Experts recommend that an advance directive should be updated at least every 10 years or in the event of a divorce or death of a spouse or agent or if your agent should become incapacitated.
- Your advance directive is valid forever, unless you revoke it or state in the form a date on which you want it to expire.
- You can make up your own form but you must include your witnessed signature and a date.
- Remember an advance directive does not take the place of your own voice when you can speak and when you can't all options are still provided to your agent for them to make that choice for you. The advance directive is your voice to them as to what you would want.



# Last but not least: The DNR

- DNR stands for Do Not Resuscitate.
  - A pre-hospital Do-Not-Resuscitate form allows people to indicate that they do not want CPR started if something happens to them outside of the hospital. Normally, emergency medical personnel are required to start CPR for all persons; having this form protects people from CPR if they wish to forgo it.
  - This form must be signed in advance by your doctor.