

Everyone Has Their Own Way of Looking at Things

Chacun voit midi à sa porte. -French proverb

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Everyone has their own way of looking at things, especially when it comes to your health care decisions. Further, your own view may change depending on what where you are in life, your goals and priorities.

What is an Advance Health Care Directive?

An Advance Health Care Directive (AHCD) is an individual's instruction for healthcare. The AHCD authorizes your agent, that you name make medical decisions for you if you cannot express your wishes or make the decisions yourself. Your agent that you designate follows your directive and advocates for your position. Your agent can be a family member or friend, but should be someone who is willing to take responsibility to ensure your wishes are followed.

The Directive IS a Work in Progress

An AHCD is an ongoing process rather than a one and done situation. Review it annually just to ensure that your agents and wishes are current. As we go through life, our children grow older and can begin filling the shoes of an agent, our close friends move far away where it may be difficult for them to serve at a moment's notice. Our preferences when we were 25 years old may be different today. Make it a point where you review your wishes and agents annually to ensure that your AHCD reflects your preferences. If they do great, if not, make those updates.

Start the Conversation

When is the best time to talk about your priorities and wishes if the inevitable happens? The answer: While there's never a great time to talk about difficult decisions, you would want to have the conversation before you need the AHCD! As difficult as it may be, the best time to talk about these difficult matters is when you're alive and well. When we're alive and well, we have the mental capacity to thoroughly think about our directives, our wishes, and what our priorities are. When you begin to have these conversations, you can communicate to our agents what your goals and wishes are. Even if they're the closest people to you, they may be surprised what your preferences are.

Lifting the Burden of Uncertainty from Loved Ones:

Another reason to have the talk is to prevent family conflicts. Even if you don't want to complete the directive, do it to help your loved ones makes decisions for you. The worse thing is for a child to "guess" what mom wanted and hope that it was the right decision. Even though, we cannot predict the exact situation, having the AHCD give a general idea can give an agent peace of mind that they did right by you.

TIPS:

- ❖ Have an AHCD – ensure that your agents contact information is updated.
- ❖ Make sure your agents and doctors have a copy – give them a PDF via email!
- ❖ AHCD with details help, we can help craft specific directives that outline your priorities and goals

- ❖ Remember the most important decisions about your life is YOU! Make sure your agents are aware of your priorities and goals.