

In North Carolina, you have the right to accept or refuse any medical or surgical treatment. At Nash Health Care Systems, we support your right to make decisions about your health care, which is why it is increasingly important for you to make your desires known through Advanced Directives.

What is an Advance Directive?

Advance Directives are written instructions that outline your desire to receive or refuse medical treatment in the event that you are unable to make such decisions. Advance Directives do not go into effect until you are no longer able to make decisions.

It is important that you discuss these matters with your family, close friends, clergy member and your physicians, nurses and other members of your health care team.

In North Carolina, there are two ways you can make a formal Advance Directive: a Living Will and/or a Health Care Power of Attorney

A Living Will

This legal document informs others of your desire about withholding and/or withdrawing treatment in the event you have a terminal illness which cannot be cured or if you are in a vegetative state from which you will not recover.

It is called a "Living Will" because it is a signed legal document but its terms take effect before your death.

The best time to prepare a Living Will is while you are healthy and before you will require surgery or hospital care.

Through a Living Will, you may instruct your doctor not to use heroic treatments to prolong your life. These treatments may include use of a breathing machine or respirator or use of a feeding tube.

In order for a Living Will to be valid, you must sign it when you are able to fully understand its emotional and physical implications. To be legal, the signature must be witnessed by others. Witnesses must NOT be your relatives, heirs to your estate, your doctor or employees of the hospital.

Health Care Power of Attorney

Through means of a Health Care Power of Attorney, you appoint a person as your "health care agent." In this legal document, you name the person

who will make medical decisions for you if you are unable to do so. You should discuss your wishes with your health care agent and ensure that the agent is someone you trust. A health care agent does not have to be a relative.

You must be competent at the time you sign a Health Care Power of Attorney for it to be legal. Anyone with a brain disease that gets worse over time (such as Parkinson's disease or Alzheimer's disease) may wish to draw up the Health Care Power of Attorney papers early in the illness. Your agent's duty is to follow your wishes.

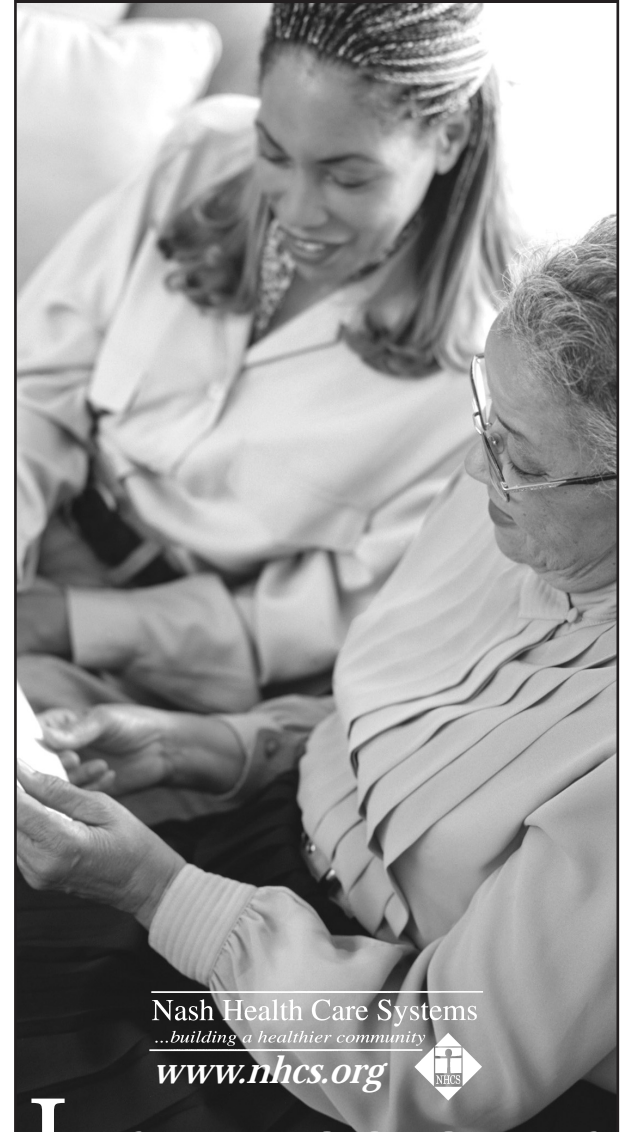
If you do not have an Advance Directive and become unable to make your own decisions, your doctor will consult with someone close to you in order to make decisions about your care.

Information you need to know

- Advance Directives will not be honored *during* any surgical procedure, invasive procedure or a procedure that involves conscious/moderate sedation.
- An Advance Directive from another state may not meet all of North Carolina's requirements. To ensure your Advance Directive is legally valid, please complete an Advance Directive form in North Carolina.
- It is important that your family, close friends and health care providers are informed about the type of care you would like to receive.
- It is wise to prepare Advance Directives when you are healthy, as opposed to when you are ill or have to go to the hospital.
- Keep your completed Advance Directive documents in a safe place. Please remember that others may not have access to your safe deposit box.
- When it is necessary for you to be hospitalized, bring your original Advance Directive with you. Upon admission, you will be asked to give a copy to your nurse.
- You may also obtain Advance Directives information and forms from www.secretary.state.nc.us/adcd/
- If you have questions or would like to discuss Advance Directives, you may call the Pastoral Care Department at Nash General Hospital at **252 443-8770**,

where a representative will be available to speak with you.

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