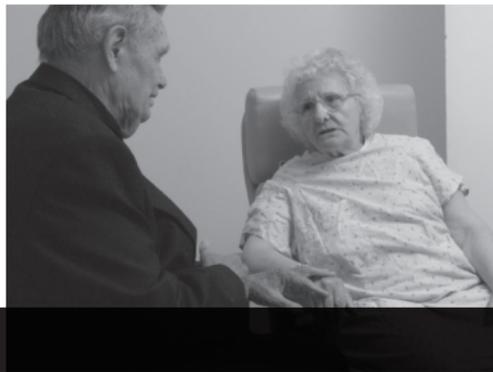
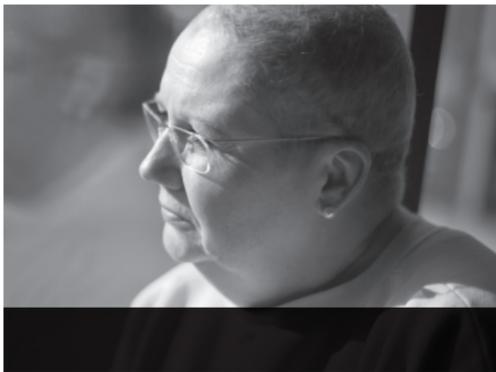




Final Choices Faithful Care

A guide to important medical decisions and how to share them with those involved in your care.



Mercy Health System

Mercy Health System is committed to providing care to our patients through all stages of their life. This guide was developed to provide you with the information to make decisions about your future medical needs and to share those decisions with those involved in your care.

If you have ethical concerns about medical decisions or have an issue to put before a committee, please contact one of the following numbers:

Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital	610.237.4065
Mercy Philadelphia Hospital	215.748.9300
Nazareth Hospital	215.335.6672
Mercy Home Health	610.690.2612
Mercy LIFE	215.339.4537
Mercy Physician Network	610.567.5322



We Are Committed

Mercy Health System is committed to faithful care for all of our patients and their families. We are ready to assist you in making final choices and in sharing them with your loved ones, doctors, and others involved in your care.

What We Believe

As Catholic healthcare facilities, our medical/moral policies are grounded in the Church's teaching on Sanctity of Life, Stewardship for Life and Respect for the Patient. We commit ourselves to uphold the ethical teachings of the Catholic Church.

Final Choices

These are the decisions each person makes about his/her own life-saving and life-sustaining treatment. These decisions relate to the end of life and how you wish to spend your final days, weeks, or months. Now is the time to think and talk about these decisions so that others can know what your wishes would be if you were unable to express your desire.

Faithful Care

No one wants to face death or serious illness alone. No one wants to be in constant pain or to lose dignity and control. "Faithful care" assures us that you will receive appropriate, quality medical care, comfort and respect no matter what final choices you make.

What You Need to Know

Who?

Who will speak for you if and when you cannot speak for yourself? Which family member or friend knows your wishes and will be on hand to work with your doctor and hospital team? This person, chosen by you, is called a health care agent or a health care representative. You can appoint a health care agent by signing a power of attorney for health care decision-making or you can appoint a health care representative in writing or by verbally notifying your physician or health care provider as to who you want to make your health care decisions should you be unable to make them yourself.

When?

When do these choices need to be made? Often they are made in times of crisis and confusion. However, these choices are best made when you are well and healthy and able to understand all of the consequences.

How?

How do you make these choices? A good place to start is by talking to your loved ones, to your doctors, to your clergy person and others you trust. Ask them to help you sort out the facts, and your own thoughts and feelings. Record them on paper, or in a form printed for this purpose. You can get these forms from the hospital, your lawyer, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, the state medical society and other organizations.

Where?

Where should you keep these forms? Keep one copy in a safe place at home. Give copies to your health care agent/health care representative and to your doctors. Bring a copy when you come into the hospital as a patient.

What?

What choices can you make? A patient or health care agent/health care representative can choose to accept or reject medical treatment. Certain treatments may come into question at times of serious or unexpected illness or injury.

To Help You Decide:

CPR

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is an effort to re-start the heart and lungs when they fail.

CPR may include:

- Chest compressions
(pushing on the chest)
- Defibrillation
(giving an electric shock to the heart)
- Intubation
(putting a tube in the throat to breathe)
- Ventilation
(using a machine for breathing)

Food and Fluids

If you cannot take food and fluids by mouth, you can receive them by tube. Intravenous tubes (IV's) go into your veins. Feeding tubes go into

your stomach through your nose or mouth. They can also be placed directly into the stomach through a hole in the skin. IV's and feeding tubes are also used to give you medicines.

The Catholic Church offers moral guidelines on the use of food or fluids in certain circumstances:

If you have an end-stage medical condition, you may forego or withdraw any treatment, including antibiotics or tube feeding that will only be burdensome or will not offer any reasonable hope of benefit.

*If you are permanently unconscious, medically assisted food and fluids should be continued as long as they are capable of sustaining your life. This treatment may be discontinued if it is no longer able to sustain your life or if it imposes disproportionate burdens on you or your family.**

*For a more complete explanation of the position of the Catholic Church see the website of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference: <http://www.pacatholic.org/bishops-statements/nutrition-and-hydration-moral-considerations/>

Other Treatments

Your illness or injury may call for one or more special treatments. These may include surgery, a kidney machine (dialysis), cancer fighting drugs (chemotherapy), antibiotics or other medicines. Talk about these with your doctor so that you understand all of the options and their possible outcomes.

Organ Donation

Giving your organs allows you to pass on the gift of life or sight to others. There is a great need for healthy eyes, kidneys, hearts, lungs, livers and skin. The organs are taken at the hospital after death.

Statement of Advance Directive Policy

At Mercy Health System facilities we ask each patient whether he or she has an Advance Health Care Directive and if so, we record it in the patient's hospital chart. An Advance Health Care Directive may include a health care power of attorney or a living will or both. The Advance Health Care Directive helps us to know and honor the patient's wishes if he or she is unable to express them.

A situation may arise in which a patient's wishes conflict with the religious beliefs and moral

values of the Catholic Church. We may refuse to honor these wishes but, in such cases, we will refer the patient to an alternative source of care. If you have any questions, or if you would like a copy of our policy on Advance Directives/Living Wills, please ask to speak with a nurse manager.

Making Decisions About Your Care and Treatment: Your rights as a patient in Pennsylvania

Introduction

In Pennsylvania, competent adults have the right to decide whether to accept, to reject or to discontinue medical care and treatment. Generally, if a person does not want to undergo a certain procedure or to receive a certain type of treatment, he or she has the right to make those wishes known to his or her doctor or other health care providers and to have those wishes respected.

There may be times, however, when a person cannot make his or her wishes known to a health care provider. For example, a person may be unconscious or injured too severely to tell his or her doctor what kind of treatment he or she would like to receive or under what circumstances the doctor should withhold care or treatment.

The purpose of this document is to educate you as to your rights to make your healthcare decisions and who may make decisions on your behalf if you are unable to make your own healthcare decisions.

To make these complex issues easier to understand, we have addressed them through a series of questions and answers. Before you make any decisions about the issues addressed in this document, you should discuss them with your doctor, members of your family or friends, and where appropriate, your lawyer.

Questions and Answers

1. What are my rights to accept, to reject, or to stop medical care or treatment?

In Pennsylvania competent adults generally have the right to decide if they want to accept, to reject or to discontinue medical care and treatment.

2. *What does my doctor have to tell me about my care and treatment?*

Your doctor should provide you with all of the information which a person in your situation reasonably would want to know in order to make an informed decision about a proposed procedure or course of treatment. This means that your doctor should tell you about the risks and benefits of the medical procedure or course of treatment which he or she is recommending, possible side effects, and alternatives, if any, to the proposed procedure or course of treatment. You may accept or reject your doctor's advice and you may seek a second opinion.

3. *Do my health care providers have to tell me if they will not honor my wishes?*

Yes. If you have executed a Living Will and if any of your health care providers cannot comply with your instructions in your Living Will, your health care providers are required to tell you or your health care agent/health care representative. Pennsylvania law also requires that your healthcare providers notify your health care agent/health care representative if your healthcare providers cannot comply with the instructions of your health care agent/health care representative.

4. *If I become physically or mentally unable to make a decision about my medical care or treatment, what can I do now to guarantee that my wishes will be followed later?*

There is no law in Pennsylvania which guarantees that a health care provider will follow your instructions in every circumstance. There are, however, steps you can take to express your wishes about future treatment. One of these steps is to prepare an Advance Health Care Directive.

5. *What is an "Advance Health Care Directive"?*

An Advance Health Care Directive is a written document telling your health care providers what care you would like to receive or not receive should you become unable to express your wishes at some time in the future. In Pennsylvania your Advance Health Care Directive may include: (1) a Living Will (also known as an "Advance Directive") and (2) a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care.

6. What is a Living Will?

A Living Will is a written document that states the kind of “life sustaining treatment” you want or do not want should you ever be incompetent and have either an end stage medical condition or be permanently unconscious.

7. Who can make a Living Will?

Any competent person who (1) is at least 18 years old, or (2) is a high school graduate, or (3) has married can make a Living Will.”

8. When does a Living Will take effect?

A Living Will only takes effect when:

- a) Your doctor has a copy of it; and
- b) Your doctor has concluded that you are “incompetent” and therefore no longer able to make decisions about the medical care you receive; and
- c) Your doctor has determined that you have an “end stage medical condition” or are “permanently unconscious.”

9. What does it mean to be “incompetent”?

Pennsylvania law provides that a person is incompetent for purposes of healthcare decision-making if a person is unable to understand the potential material benefits, risks and alternatives involved in a specific proposed health care decision; or unable to make that health care decision on his own behalf; or unable to communicate that decision to any other person.

The law allows your doctor to decide if you are “incompetent” and does not require a judge to make that decision.

10. What should my Advance Health Care Directive include?

An Advance Health Care Directive can include your Living Will or your designation of your health care agent or both. Your Living Will is not valid, however, unless you have taken the following steps:

- 1) You must sign your Living Will. If you are unable to do so, you must have someone else sign it for you under your direction; and
- 2) Two people who are at least 18 years old must sign your Living Will as witnesses. Neither of those witnesses may be the person who signed your Living Will if you were unable to sign it yourself.

You should also date your Living Will, even though the law does not require it.

11. *What if I already have an Advance Health Care Directive?*

You should review your Advance Health Care Directive to see that it meets the two requirements described in the answer to Question 10.

12. *To whom should I give my Advance Health Care Directive?*

You should give a copy of your Advance Health Care Directive to your doctor, hospital, nursing home or other health care provider. When you enter a hospital or nursing facility, the law requires your doctor or other health care provider to ask you if you have an Advance Health Care Directive. If you give a copy of your Advance Health Care Directive to your doctor or other health care provider, that document must be made a part of your medical record.

13. *What if my doctor or healthcare provider refuses to follow the directions in my Living Will?*

Your doctor and any other healthcare provider must tell you if they cannot follow your wishes, or if the policies of the institution prevent them from honoring your wishes. This is one reason why you should give a copy of your Living Will to your doctor or to those in charge of your medical care and treatment.

If you are incompetent and have named someone in your Advance Health Care Directive to be your health care agent or if you have appointed someone as your health care representative that person must be told if the directions in your Living Will cannot be honored.

The doctor or other healthcare provider who cannot honor your wishes must then help transfer you to another healthcare provider who is willing to carry out your health care wishes.

14. *Is a Living Will effective when I am pregnant?*

Pennsylvania law generally does not permit a doctor or other healthcare provider to honor the Living Will of a pregnant woman who has directed that she not be kept alive, unless her pregnancy has progressed far enough along to deliver her baby.

15. What if I change my mind after I have written a Living Will?

Pennsylvania's Living Wills Act states that you may revoke your Living Will at any time and in any manner. All that you must do is tell your doctor or healthcare provider that you are revoking it. Someone who saw or heard you revoke your Living Will may also tell your doctor or other healthcare provider about the revocation.

You can change or rewrite your Living Will. If you change your mind after you have written down your instructions, you should destroy your written instructions or revoke them and write new ones. You should also consider telling every one who participated in your decision-making process that you have changed your mind and give a copy of any new instructions to your doctor, healthcare provider, and anyone else who had a copy of your old instructions.

Health Care Power of Attorney

16. What is a Health Care Power of Attorney and a Health Care Representative?

A Health Care Power of Attorney is a document which allows you ("the Principal") to name another person (your "health care agent") to make certain medical decisions for you if you are unable to make them for yourself. You can select anyone to be your health care agent.

Pennsylvania law allows you to appoint a "health care representative" if you have not appointed a health care agent. You can appoint a health care representative in writing or you can verbally appoint a health care representative by notifying your physician or health care provider.

Your health care agent or health care representative can make health care decisions on your behalf including:

- 1) Selecting and discharging your health care providers;
- 2) Approving or disapproving diagnostic tests, surgical procedures or medications; and
- 3) Directing your health care providers to initiate, continue, withhold or withdraw all forms of life sustaining treatment including instructions not to resuscitate you.

Discussing your instructions

17. *What are some of the major differences between a “Living Will” and a “Durable Power of Attorney” for health care?”*

These are just some of the differences between the two documents:

- a) A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care names a person or persons to make a broad range of healthcare decisions for you should you become incompetent.
- b) A Living Will specifies what kind of life sustaining treatment you want to receive should you become incompetent and have an end stage medical condition or be permanently unconscious.
- c) Unlike a Durable Power of Attorney for health care, a Living Will only takes effect when you have an end stage medical condition or are permanently unconscious.

18. *May I have both a Durable Power of Attorney for health care and a Living Will?*

Yes.

19. *With whom should I discuss my instructions before I write them down?*

Before you write your instructions down, you may wish to discuss them with your doctor, members of your family, friends or other appropriate persons—such as a member of the clergy. If you are writing a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare Decision-making, you should also discuss your wishes with the person you are naming as your health care agent. Similarly, if you are writing a Living Will and naming someone in that document to carry out your wishes, you should discuss your wishes with that person.

20. *To whom should I give my written instructions?*

You should give your written instructions to your family doctor and, if applicable, to your hospital, nursing home or other healthcare provider. You may also want to give a copy to your family or anyone else involved in your healthcare decision-making process.

21. *What if I don't leave instructions or name a person who will make decisions for me?*

If you become unable to express your wishes about your medical care or treatment and do not leave instructions or name a person who will make decisions for you, Pennsylvania law

provides a hierarchy of persons who can make health care decisions on your behalf. The hierarchy of persons who may make health care decisions on your behalf in descending order is:

- 1) Your spouse, unless an action for divorce is pending, and your adult children who are not children of your spouse
- 2) Your adult child
- 3) Your parent
- 4) Your adult brother or sister
- 5) Your adult grandchild
- 6) Any adult who has knowledge of your preferences and values

22. What if I have expressed my wishes orally about treatment, but have not put my wishes in writing?

Oral directions which you have given to your physician or your family will sometimes be followed by healthcare providers, depending on how detailed and recent those instructions were. Thus, you may wish to tell your personal physician and your family your wishes about future treatment, even if you choose not to sign an Advance Health Care Directive.

23. Do I have to write a Living Will or Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care?

No. It's your decision. Under the law, a healthcare provider may not condition the provision of your care or otherwise discriminate against you on the basis of whether you have executed such a document. Moreover, under Pennsylvania law, no healthcare provider or insurer may charge a different fee or rate depending on whether you have executed a Living Will.

24. Are Living Wills and Durable Powers of Attorney executed in other states recognized in Pennsylvania?

If a Living Will or Durable Power of Attorney executed in another state meets the requirements for such documents under Pennsylvania law (for example, witnessed by two individuals) the document will be recognized in Pennsylvania.

25. What if I wish to donate my organs or other body parts after my death? Can I include this wish in my Advance Health Care Directive?

Yes. If you are at least 18 years old, you may make an anatomical gift of the entire body or of body parts (including organs, tissues, eyes, bones, arteries, or blood) by expressing your intent to do so in your Advance Health Care Directive. You may also grant your health care agent the power to make an anatomical donation in your durable power of attorney for health care.

26. If I have more questions about Living Wills or Durable Powers of Attorney for HealthCare, whom should I contact?

In addition to a lawyer, there are many individuals or groups who can provide you with further information or give you a sample form for an Advance Directive. Among these are forms provided by the PA Office on Aging and by the PA Catholic Conference. Below are addresses that may be helpful to you.

- 1) Your local long term care ombudsman, who can be reached by calling your community's "Area Agency on Aging" (AAA). The AAA phone number is in the "blue pages" of your phone book.
- 2) Pennsylvania Catholic Conference
223 North St.
P.O. Box 2835
Harrisburg, PA 17105
717.238.9613
www.pacatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/lwformweb.pdf
- 3) Pennsylvania Department of Aging
231 State Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101-9896
717.783.1924
www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/directory_of_services/4984/advance_directives
- 4) The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
225 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717.238.2277
- 5) The Pennsylvania Medical Society
777 East Park Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8820
717.558.7750

Discussing the Issues....

The Institutional Ethics Committees of the Mercy Health System Facilities – Helping Patients, Families and Staff with Challenging Medical/Ethical Decisions

Technology is continually advancing and changing healthcare, bringing with it difficult and complex decisions for patients, their families, physicians and other healthcare professionals. For example, how does a family know the appropriate time to request a “Do Not Resuscitate” status for a patient? What factors should be considered in making such a decision?

The Institutional Ethics Committee at each of Mercy Health System's hospitals seeks to address these issues and provide the help necessary for you to choose wisely. They confront questions in areas such as: appropriate level of treatment, end of life decisions, informed consent, and responsible allocation of limited resources.

In the spirit of our Mission and Philosophy, we commit ourselves to consultations and on-going review of such issues.

The Role of the Institutional Ethics Committee

The Institutional Ethics Committees were formed to assist patients, their families and staff by providing a forum to anticipate ethical dilemmas and to serve as a resource to address complex issues as they arise. The committees also educate the hospital community and the public about today's difficult healthcare choices. The committees are comprised of administrators, physicians, nurses, attorneys, theologians and pastoral care personnel.

The committees meet regularly. Their membership represents various medical/surgical and supportive services. The groups support the integration of ethical considerations in the decision making process and strive to protect the rights of those involved in making and implementing decisions.

The Institutional Ethics Committees do not make patient care decisions. They advise and educate patients and families on options. The ultimate medical decision belongs to the patient, the family or the patient's health care agent/representative. A patient has a right to participate in consultation meetings regarding his/her treatment decisions that deal with medical ethical issues.

A Resource to Serve You

All topics on the agendas are ones that have been brought to the attention of committee members by healthcare professionals, patients and their families. The focus of the committees is not to enforce rules or regulations, but to provide advice and recommendations which may be helpful in difficult clinical situations.

The Ethics Committees also monitor state and federal legislation for ethical implications, recommend policies and guidelines, and provide direction to assure consistency of interpretation.

Advice, support, education, and recognition are important components of the committees' objectives. The identification of critical issues and the assurance that patients will be cared for with respect and dignity is paramount to any Ethics Committee.

How to Access the Committees

If you have ethical concerns about medical decisions or have an issue to put before a committee, please contact a member at one of the following numbers:

Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital	610.237.4065
Mercy Philadelphia Hospital	215.747.9300
Nazareth Hospital	215.335.6672
Mercy Home Health	610.690.2612
Mercy LIFE	215.339.4537
Mercy Physician Network	610.567.5322



Mercy Health System

Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital

1500 Lansdowne Avenue
Darby, PA 19023
610.237.4000



Mercy Philadelphia Hospital

501 South 54th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19143
215.748.9000



Nazareth Hospital

2601 Holme Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19152
215.335.6000



Mercy Home Health

1001 Baltimore Pike
Springfield, PA 19064
610.690.2500

Mercy LIFE

1930 S. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19145
215.339.4747



Mercy Physician Network

One West Elm Street, Suite 100
Conshohocken, PA 19428
610.567.5322

1.877.GO MERCY

www.mercyhealth.org

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