

Advance Directives

Advance directives are legal documents that describe a person's preferences for end-of-life care. These documents speak for you when you are not able to speak for yourself because of illness or incapacity.

Types of advance directives:

Living Will

A living will allows you to document your wishes concerning medical treatments at the end of life.

In Colorado, the Living Will is called the "Declaration as to Medical Treatment." It tells your doctor what to do about artificial life-support measures if you have a terminal illness and are unable to speak for yourself, or you are in a "persistent vegetative state" (a state of permanent unconsciousness involving massive brain damage but not "brain death").

Medical Power of Attorney

A medical power of attorney (or healthcare proxy) allows you to appoint a person you trust as your healthcare agent (or surrogate decision maker), who is authorized to make medical decisions on your behalf.

When you are able to make decisions, the responsibility is returned to you.

CPR Directive

A CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) directive allows you to refuse in advance any attempt to resuscitate you by chest compressions, medications, defibrillation (electric shock), or intubation (artificial breathing machine) if your heart or breathing malfunctions or stops.

The Colorado CPR directive must be signed by both the individual (or the individual's proxy) and his/her physician.