



## Information on Advanced Directives

In the state of New Mexico, every competent individual over the age of 18 has the right to make their own health care decisions. This includes the right to determine what type of medical care you receive, and the right to discontinue or refuse treatment. In the situation you are unable to speak or make decisions you may wish to designate someone to make health care decisions for you. You have the right to be informed of the nature of your illness and treatment options available. You also have the right to be educated on the risks of denying treatments and any alternative options that may be available.

Advanced Directives are legal documents that declare your choices regarding medical treatment. They also name an appointed person of your choice to make medical decisions on your behalf, given a situation you are unable to do so. The two types of advanced directives recognized by New Mexico are “Instructions for Health Care” also known as a “Living Will,” or “Power of Attorney for Health Care.”

“Instructions for Health Care” are documents that state whether or not you want life sustaining treatments and or procedures if you are in a terminal state or irreversible coma.

Power of Attorney for Health Care allows you to select another person to make medical decisions in your place given the fact you are temporarily or permanently unable to state those decisions for yourself. Power of Attorney for Health Care should state when you would like this legal document to become effective. For example, “this power of Attorney for Health Care will be effective when a physician and a second licensed healthcare professional determine I am unable to make my own healthcare decisions.”

In the situation you do not have an Advanced Directive, medical care will be provided and everything available will be done to sustain life. If you are unable to provide information, the medical providers will then look to your family (listed below) to assist in making the decisions for you:

- Spouse
- An individual in a long-term relationship of indefinite duration with you and who considers themselves to be responsible for your well-being.
- Any adult children
- Either of your parents
- Any adult siblings

For more information or to obtain free forms for Advanced Directives with state of New Mexico visit <http://www.caringinfo.org/files/public/ad/NewMexico.pdf>.