

TEXASLIVINGWILL.ORG DEFINITIONS

Advance Directive

An instruction to administer, withhold, or withdraw life-sustaining treatment in the event of a terminal or irreversible condition. The Texas advance directive consists of primarily two documents (1) directive to physician and (2) medical power of attorney, and secondarily (3) out-of-hospital DNR and (4) directive for mental health treatment.

Artificial nutrition and hydration

Artificial nutrition and hydration is used to sustain life when a person can not take in sufficient fluids on their own. This may be accomplished using tubes inserted into the veins or directly into the stomach. These are used to give the person fluids and nutrition. The intravenous method is the most commonly used method for fluids only. Feeding tubes can be inserted through the nose or surgically through the abdominal wall into the stomach. Special nutritional products are made to be given through these tubes for hydration and nutrition.

Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)

Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is the use of chest pressure, artificial breathing and/or electric shock to start the heart and lungs working again after a person stops breathing or their heart stops beating. CPR can maintain some blood flow to the brain and other vital organs while efforts are being made to get the heart working again. These efforts include shocking the heart and giving medicines through an intravenous line. (Kidney End-of-Life Coalition). Many people think CPR usually works because of the way it is shown on television or in the movies. When CPR is done on hospitalized patients only 12-15% will leave the hospital alive. The more health problems a person has, the less likely it is that CPR will bring them back to life. Persons brought back to life may not return to their prior health and abilities.¹

Competent

Possessing the ability, based on reasonable medical judgment, to understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of a treatment decision, including the significant benefits and harms of and reasonable alternatives to a proposed treatment decision.

Dialysis

Dialysis is a method of clearing toxins from the blood when the kidneys are no longer functioning. *Hemodialysis* uses a machine to cycle the blood in and out of the body. The machine is an artificial kidney doing the work of the nonfunctioning kidneys. Dialysis can be done acutely (for a short term to remove a toxin from the body, to reduce fluid in the body, or to give the kidneys time to recover) or chronically (for a long time where a person receives a treatment for 3 to 4 hours several days weekly). There is another type of dialysis called *peritoneal dialysis* in which fluid is placed into the abdomen and that fluid absorbs the body's toxins over a number of days. Then the fluid is removed through a plastic tube to clear the body of these toxins.

Directive to Physician

A signed and witnessed document that states a patient's treatment decisions. This document is also known as a "living will." This document goes into effect only when you are no longer able to communicate with health care providers and the doctor determines that you have an incurable, irreversible condition.

Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR)

An order written by a physician based on conversations with a patient or the patient's legal representative, that no mechanical or chemical means will be used to resuscitate a person after his or her heart has stopped beating or breathing has ceased.

Health Care or Treatment Decision

Consent, refusal to consent, or withdrawal of consent to health care, treatment, service, or a procedure to maintain, diagnose, or treat an individual's physical or mental condition, including such a decision on behalf of a minor.

Health Care Provider

(1) a hospital; (2) a state licensed institution including long term care facilities; (3) a home and community support services agency; (4) a personal care facility; and (5) a special care facility.

Incompetent

Lacking the ability, based on reasonable medical judgment, to understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of a treatment decision, including the significant benefits and harms of and reasonable alternatives to a proposed treatment decision.

Intravenous Antibiotics

Intravenous antibiotics are those antibiotics given through plastic tubing into the veins to fight infections.

Irreversible Condition

A condition, injury, or illness: (A) that may be treated but is never cured or eliminated; (B) that leaves a person unable to care for or make decisions for the person's own self; and (C) that, without life-sustaining treatment provided in accordance with the prevailing standard of medical care, is fatal.

Explanation: Many serious illnesses such as cancer, failure of major organs (kidney, heart, liver, or lung), and serious brain disease such as Alzheimer's dementia may be considered irreversible early on. There is no cure, but the patient may be kept alive for prolonged periods of time if the patient receives life-sustaining treatments. Late in the course of the same illness, the disease may be considered terminal when, even with treatment, the patient is expected to die. You may wish to consider which burdens of treatment you would be willing to accept in an effort to achieve a particular outcome. This is a very personal decision that you may wish to discuss with your physician, family, or other important persons in your life.

Life-Sustaining Treatment

Treatment that, based on reasonable medical judgment, sustains the life of a patient and without which the patient will die. The term includes both life-sustaining medications and artificial life support, such as mechanical breathing machines, kidney dialysis treatment, and artificial nutrition and hydration. The term does not include the administration of pain management medication or the performance of a medical procedure considered to be necessary to provide comfort care, or any other medical care provided to alleviate a patient's pain.

Living Will

Allows you to express your healthcare choices ahead of time regarding whether you want life-sustaining treatment to begin or to continue if you are unable to communicate your wishes. This document goes into effect only when you are no longer able to communicate with healthcare providers and are determined by the doctor to have an incurable, irreversible condition. Also known as a *directive to physician*.

Medical Power of Attorney

A document delegating to an agent authority to make health care decisions when a patient is incompetent, incapacitated, or no longer to make or state his/her own choices.

Out-of-hospital DNR

A legally binding out-of-hospital do-not-resuscitate order, in a specified form, prepared and signed by the attending physician of a person, that documents the instructions of a person or the person's legally authorized representative and directs health care professionals acting in an out-of-hospital setting not to initiate or continue the following life-sustaining treatment: (i) cardiopulmonary resuscitation; (ii) advanced airway management; (iii) artificial ventilation; (iv) defibrillation; (v) transcutaneous cardiac pacing; and (vi) other life-sustaining treatment. This order cannot authorize the withholding of medical interventions or therapies considered necessary to provide comfort care or to alleviate pain or to provide water or nutrition. "Out-of-hospital setting" means a location in which health care professionals are called for assistance, including long-term care facilities, in-patient hospice facilities, private homes, hospital outpatient or emergency departments, physician's offices, and vehicles during transport.

Pain Control

Pain control is an essential part of end-of-life care. Pain is best controlled with morphine or other types of opioids. Medicine given for pain does not create addicts. Addiction should not be an issue because the pain medicine is given purely to relieve pain and suffering. At the end of life no one should be refused adequate pain control. Among the most effective pain medications at the immediate end-of-life is intravenous morphine. While morphine can slow the rate of breathing it is powerful to relieve pain and suffering. The slowed breathing may bring on death sooner in some persons but this is a side effect of relieving the pain. In Texas, morphine is used to relieve pain and not to shorten a life.

Palliative Care or Comfort Care

Care directed toward the quality of life of patients who are dying, including the relief of pain and other symptoms, attention to the psychological and spiritual needs of the patient, and providing support for the dying patient and the patient's family. *As per American Medical Association*

Respiratory Support

Respiratory support is used to help a person breathe. The support is provided by a ventilator (respirator). These machines work by pushing air into the lungs through a tube is inserted into the trachea (windpipe). Most often the tube is inserted through the mouth (this is called an *endotracheal tube*). When patients are awake, they find this tube to be uncomfortable and are not able to speak with it in place. This type of respiratory support is better tolerated when the patient is sedated or comatose but can be maintained with an awake patient if needed. If respiratory support with a ventilator is needed for an extended period of time, a cut is made in the front of the neck and a tube (through a surgical procedure known as *tracheotomy*) is inserted directly into the trachea so the mouth can be used for eating and speaking.

Terminal condition

An incurable condition caused by injury, disease, or illness that according to reasonable medical judgment will produce death within six months, even with available life-sustaining treatment provided in accordance with the prevailing standard of medical care. A patient who has been admitted to a program under which the person receives hospice services provided by a home and community support services agency is presumed to have a terminal condition. Explanation: Many serious illnesses may be considered irreversible early in the course of the illness, but they may not be considered terminal until the disease is fairly advanced. In thinking about terminal illness and its treatment, you again may wish to consider the relative benefits and burdens of treatment and discuss your wishes with your physician, family, or other important persons in your life.