

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING – What do these terms mean?

Advance Directive: Any plan, written or oral, that communicates an individual's goals, values and preferences for future medical treatment. An advance directive is a broad term that encompasses a variety of written forms, such as living will, medical durable power of attorney for healthcare, MOST form, and CPR directive.

CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation): Involves pressing down hard on your chest and forcing air into your lungs in an attempt to revive you when you die. If you do not tell us NOT to start CPR, and your heart or lungs stop or have a serious problem, we will start CPR. An electrical shock and drugs may also be administered to try to start the heart. Then a tube will be inserted into your lungs to help you breath.

CPR Directive: When signed by you and your doctor, this document tells paramedics, emergency personnel and doctors not to attempt to resuscitate you with chest compressions, medications, defibrillation (electric shock), or intubation (artificial breathing machine) if your heart or breathing malfunctions or stops.

Comfort Care: Care and treatment at the end of life which promotes comfort and allows for natural death. Goals include quality pain control, symptom management and emotional and spiritual support. Care does not stop – it shifts from a focus on cure to focus on comfort without the use of intubation, artificial nutrition/hydration or CPR. Treatment may include medication for pain, positioning, mouth and skin care and other strategies that promote comfort.

DNAR: (Do Not Attempt Resuscitation also known as DNR): is a doctor's order written to withhold CPR.

Feeding Tube: A tube that is inserted into a person's stomach, mouth, abdominal wall, through the nose or an alternate route to provide nutrition and/or hydration. It may be used when individuals are unable to take adequate amounts of food and water by mouth.

Intubation and Mechanical Ventilation: The process of inserting a tube through the mouth and into the airway. The tube is then connected to a mechanical ventilation machine which pushes air into the lungs to deliver artificial/mechanical breaths to the patient.

Life Sustaining Treatments: Medical treatment or procedures provided in an attempt to prolong life including, but not limited to CPR, mechanical ventilation, medications, blood transfusions, nutrition and hydration by feeding tube or other medical devices (dialysis machine, defibrillators, left ventricular assist devices).

Persistent vegetative state: There is permanent brain damage, severe enough to render an individual unaware of self or the environment. The patient has irretrievably lost the ability to meaningfully appreciate, understand, and communicate appropriately. There is no reasonable chance for significant improvement.

Terminal illness: Death is expected to occur with or without medical interventions, or condition is irreversible, or there is no reasonable chance of recovery.