



Mountain Coalition for Healthcare Decisions

Completing Your Advance Directive

MountainDecisions.org

An Advance Directive is a legal document. If you become unable to make decisions about your own healthcare, an Advance Directive allows you to say who you wish to make decisions for you, as well as what kind of treatment you want or do not want.

An Advance Directive goes into effect only when you cannot tell your healthcare provider your wishes. As long as you are able to make your own decisions, you have the authority to approve or decline any medical treatment. If you do not complete an Advance Directive, North Carolina law says who will make your medical decisions. If you do not have a legal decision maker (guardian, health care agent, or other power of attorney with authority to make health care decisions), the following people will make decisions for you, in this order:

1. Your legally married spouse
2. The majority of your reasonably available parents and adult children (age 18 or older)
3. The majority of your reasonably available adult siblings (age 18 or older)
4. A person who has a relationship with you, who is acting in good faith, and can state your wishes

This Advance Directive has two parts. First, a **Health Care Power of Attorney** (Part A) allows you to designate who will be your first and second decision maker (healthcare agent). The second part is a **Living Will** (Part B) which allows you to state your desire not to receive life-prolonging measures if you are not expected to recover.

Please read the document carefully and discuss your choices and wishes with those close to you. You may want to discuss this with your physician as well. Some of the questions to consider include:

- What does a good life mean to you? What makes your life happy or satisfying?
- Has anyone close to you been sick or badly hurt? What was that like? Who made the decisions?
- If you became very sick, or injured, who can make good decisions for you?

Do not sign the document until a notary and two witnesses are present. Your appointed decision maker does not have to be present to complete this form, but make sure they agree to be your healthcare agent and understand your wishes.

Once complete, make copies of your advance directive and give them to your healthcare agents, your family, your physicians, and anyone else you think may be involved in your care. Keep the original in a safe, accessible place. Consider updating your advance directive every five years, or after any major life event.

For more information or to print additional copies, visit www.mountaindecisions.org, or contact us at 828-348-2844 or mchd@ccwnc.org.