

# The GIFT Project



Giving Instructions for Tomorrow

## Advance Directives

You have the right to decide what may or may not be done during the course of medical treatment. Your doctor and health care team are available to discuss the nature of your condition, treatment options, and possible risks to help you make an informed decision about the kind of treatment you want.

By completing advance directives, you can express treatment preferences for the future and guide your loved ones if they need to make decisions for you. The GIFT Project offers information about these three advance directives:

- Medical Power of Attorney
- Directive to Physicians and Family or Surrogates (Living Will)
- Out of Hospital Do Not Resuscitate Order

# Advance Directives

*All three advance directives must be witnessed and do not require a notary.*

## Directive to Physicians and Family or Surrogates (Living Will)

### What is it?

The Directive to Physicians and Family or Surrogates (DTP) is a legal document that allows you to direct physicians to administer or withdraw life-sustaining treatment when you have a terminal or irreversible condition and are unable to speak for yourself. You may also specify which treatments you would like, and which you would not.

### What you should know:

- Decide for yourself what treatment you will and will not accept. Talk with your family, clergy and/or friends and then complete the document.
- A DTP goes into effect only when you have a terminal or irreversible illness.

## Medical Power of Attorney

### What is it?

The Medical Power of Attorney (MPOA) is a legal document that allows you to designate someone to make health care decisions for you if you are no longer able to make them for yourself.

### What you should know:

- Discuss your health care preferences and beliefs with this person and complete the document.
- Choose a MPOA who is 18 years or older and who you trust to advocate for your wishes.
- The person you choose makes decisions for you only if you cannot communicate or make the decisions for yourself.
- If you become unable to make your own health care decisions and do not have advance directives in place, then certain family members and others can make medical decisions on your behalf.

## Out-of-Hospital Do-Not-Resuscitate Order

### What is it?

The Out-of-Hospital Do-Not-Resuscitate Order (OOH-DNR) is a physician's order that tells health care and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers not to use specific medical interventions to try to revive you. This does not prevent medical interventions for comfort.

### What you should know:

- EMS cannot honor this order unless it is signed by both you and your physician.
- If you are unable to complete this document, your Medical Power of Attorney or a qualified relative may complete it on your behalf.
- Once complete, post the Out-of-Hospital DNR Order in your home. Keep a copy with you and give copies to your healthcare providers.

These advance directives pertain only to health care decisions – NOT financial matters.

You can change or revoke your advance directives at any time for any reason.

