

YOU DECIDE ABOUT YOUR CARE...

According to Louisiana law, all persons have the right to control decisions relating to their own medical care. You have the right to accept or refuse medical treatments. Your right to choose includes the decision to have Life-sustaining procedures withheld or withdrawn in instances where the individual involved is diagnosed as having terminal and irreversible illness.

In order to make one's wishes known to his/her doctor and hospital, the law gives you the right to make a declaration specifying those wishes in the event that you become incompetent or otherwise unable to speak for yourself.

No hospital or provider may condition the provision of care or otherwise discriminate against you based on whether or not you have an Advanced Directive.

Healthcare providers use the term "Advanced Directives" to refer to several documents that will help the people caring for you to understand your wishes if you cannot speak for yourself due to illness or injury. There are a variety of Advance Directive documents, including a **Living Will**, a **Power of Attorney**, and **LaPOST**.

No matter which format you choose, the written declaration has to be signed by you. In addition, the Living Will and the Power of Attorney must be signed by you in the presence of two adult witnesses. Those witnesses may not be related to you and would not be entitled to any portion of your estate.

It is important for you to notify your doctor if you already have executed an Advanced Directive document. You should also provide your doctor and the hospital a copy of the document to be placed in your medical record so that they know about your wishes.

If you do not have one of these documents, we encourage you to discuss the issue with your doctor. The hospital has sample forms for these documents available should you want to look at them. These are general forms. If you have specific needs, you will want to consult your attorney to make sure that all of your wishes are considered and documented.

You may also make an oral or nonverbal declaration of your wishes as long as it is in the presence of two witnesses, as defined above.

If you become comatose, incompetent, or otherwise physically or mentally incapable of communication and be diagnosed and certified as having a terminal and irreversible condition or be in a continual profound comatose state with no reasonable chance of recovery, the following individuals, in the following order of priority, may make a declaration on your behalf, as long as you have not already executed a declaration:

1. A judicially appointed tutor or curator
2. Your spouse not judicially separated
3. Your adult child
4. Your parent
5. Your siblings
6. Your other ascendants or descendants

What are the Declarations I May Use to State My Wishes?

LIVING WILL



A Living Will is a legal document you can use to state your preferences regarding medical treatments, including, but not limited to, life-sustaining treatments and/or who would act as a your decision maker should you become unable to make such decisions.

DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

A Durable Power of Attorney is a legal document that designates someone to make medical decisions on your behalf. This designated decision maker may make all decisions concerning any life-sustaining procedures provided to you if you should be diagnosed with a terminal and irreversible condition.

LOUISIANA PHYSICIAN ORDER FOR SCOPE OF TREATMENT – "LAPOST"

The LaPost document gives patients usually already diagnosed with life-limiting diseases and irreversible conditions the ability to state their own preferences for medical care if they become unable to communicate. However, you can ask your doctor for a LaPOST document at any time. It allows your doctor to translate your wishes into an order for all health care workers to follow in relation to end-of-life care. The information in the LaPOST document is obtained from the information you give your doctor about your wishes regarding such care.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS DECLARATIONS?

DECLARATIONS?

A **Living Will** is a legal document that provides instructions specifying what types of treatment should be given to a person when that person becomes unable to make decisions or can no longer speak for him/herself. The **Living Will** only goes into effect if you lose the ability to make decisions and you are terminally ill. The **Living Will** also appoints a health care representative and guides inpatient treatment decisions when it is made available to the doctor and/or hospital. **Living Wills** are not followed by emergency personnel.



The Power of Attorney only designates someone to make medical decisions on your behalf. It may be executed along with an **Living Will** or a **LaPOST** document that further outline your wishes about end-of-life care.

The LaPOST document is a physician's order that specifically outlines a patient's medical treatment wishes and goals of care for persons with advanced illnesses that are life-limiting and irreversible. Because the **LaPOST** document becomes part of the patient's medical record, it travels with the patient across health care settings. The **LaPOST** document guides emergency personnel and inpatient care, if the treatment staff are aware of the document.

You Can Change Your Mind At Any Time



Any of the declarations can be revoked at any time. If you no longer have decision-making capacity, your health care representative may revoke the declaration on your behalf if there is new knowledge of a change in your medical condition or in your wishes. The hospital and your physician must comply with your **Advance Directive** unless you revoke it. In rare instances, your treating physician may object to honoring your **Advance Directive** based on personal beliefs. If that is the case, the **Medical Staff** will delegate your care to another physician who can comply with your **Advance Directive**. This is the accepted practice by the State of Louisiana, as referred to in State statute La. R.S. 40:1229.58.1-1229.58.10. In addition, the issue may be brought before the hospital Ethics Committee. As of this writing, there are no medical conditions or procedures identified by the hospital that are affected by such a conscience objection of a physician. However, there is always the possibility that such a situation may occur in the future that has not been anticipated.

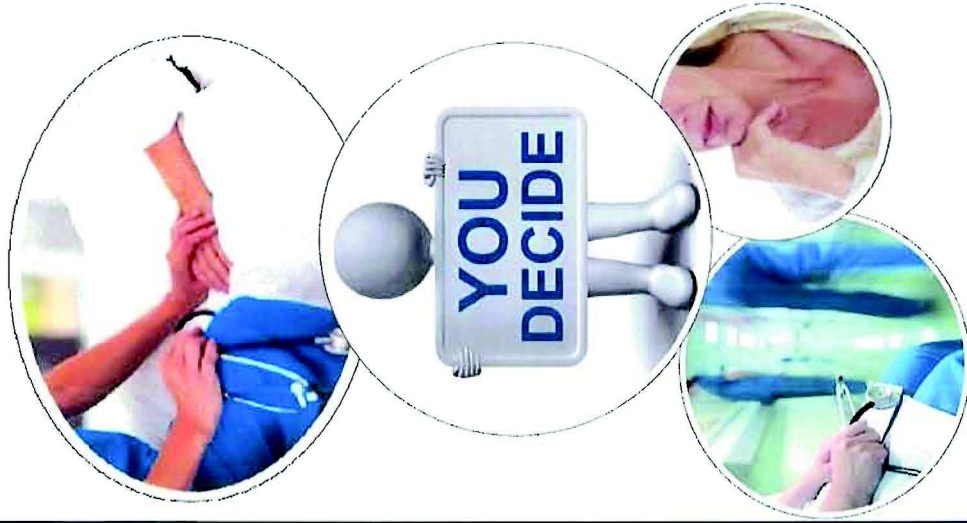
Want to know More or Get a Sample Document While You are Here at the Hospital?

Just ask your doctor, nurse, or social worker for assistance. These sample documents are available for you at any time.

If you have any complaints concerning our hospital's **Advance Directive policies**, you may contact the hospital Patient Advocate at (985) 878-1259 or the Louisiana Department of Health at (225) 342-9500.

LKMC (6/17)

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Giving you the power of choice



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