

# Advance Directives.

## What is an Advance Directive?

An advance directive puts your choices for health care into writing. The advance directive tells your doctor and family:

- What kind of health care you do or do not want if:
  - You lose consciousness.
  - You can no longer make health care decisions.
  - You cannot tell your doctor or family what kind of care you want.
  - You want to donate your organ(s) after your death.
  - You want someone else to decide about your health care if you can't.

Having an advance directive means your loved ones or your doctor can make medical choices for you based on your wishes. There are three types of advance directives in Washington State.

1. Durable power of attorney for health care. This names another person to make medical decisions for you if you are not able to make them for yourself.
2. Healthcare directive (living will). This written statement tells people whether you want treatments to prolong your life.
3. Organ donation request.

Talk to your doctor and those close to you. You can cancel an advance directive at any time. You can get more information from us, your doctor, or a hospital about advance directives. You can also:

- Ask to see your health plan's policies on advance directives.
- File a grievance with your plan or the Health Care Authority if your directive is not followed.

The Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form is for anybody who has a serious health condition, and needs to make decisions about life-sustaining treatment. Your provider can use the POLST form to represent your wishes as clear and specific medical orders. To learn more about Advance Directives contact us.

# Mental Health Advance Directives.

## What is a mental health advance directive?

A mental health advance directive is a legal written document that describes what you want to happen if your mental health problems become so severe that you need help from others. This might be when your judgment is impaired and/or you are unable to communicate effectively.

It can inform others about what treatment you want or don't want, and it can identify a person to whom you have given the authority to make decisions on your behalf.

If you have a physical health care advance directive you should share that with your mental health care provider so they know your wishes.

## How do I complete a mental health advance directive?

You can get a copy of the advance directive form and more information on how to complete it at <https://www.hca.wa.gov/health-care-services-and-supports/behavioral-health-recovery/mental-health-advance-directives>. A model "fill-in-the-blanks" form was included in the state law and it is probably the best and easiest way to create a mental health advance directive.

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, behavioral health care provider, or your Ombuds can also help you complete the form. Contact us for more information.