

Summary of Important Documents

Advance Directives

An **Advance Directive** is a set of instructions, usually written, that allows you to specify the kind of treatment you would want if you were ill and unable to speak for yourself. The *Living Will* and the *Durable Healthcare Power of Attorney* are advance directives. With an advance directive, you can inform your doctor what your wishes are. Generally you can prepare advance directives in several ways:

- Download forms from the internet**
- Write your wishes down on paper**
- Obtain forms from the Department of Health or Office on Aging**
- Use an attorney**

Durable Healthcare Power of Attorney

A **Durable Healthcare Power of Attorney** is an advance directive that allows you to name an agent to speak for you in medical matters if you cannot speak for yourself either because of illness or an accident. Your agent should know your wishes and agree to follow them.

Living Will

A **Living Will** is an advance directive that states your wishes for medical treatment, including artificial nutrition and hydration, when you are in imminent danger of dying.

Do Not Resuscitate Order

A **Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order** is another kind of advance directive. A DNR is a request not to have cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if your heart stops or if you stop breathing. (Unless given other instructions, hospital staff will try to help all patients whose hearts have stopped or who have stopped breathing). You can use an advance directive form or tell your doctor that you don't want to be resuscitated. In this case, a DNR order is put in your medical chart by your doctor. DNR orders are accepted by doctors and hospitals in all states.