



LAC COURTE OREILLES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Advance Directive and Living Will

Your Right to Direct Your Future Health Care

“How to get the care you want when you cannot express your wishes”

CHOOSING FUTURE HEALTH CARE

- You have the right to make decisions about your health care. You can choose whether or not you want surgery or medications. You also have the right to plan ahead for when you become unable to make health care decisions. You can do this by making an Advance Directive.

WHAT IS AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

- An Advance Directive is a document that states the treatments you want and do not want. It also explains how you want health care decisions to be made for you if you are no longer able to make them yourself.
- Your Advance Directive is about your personal wishes, beliefs, and values. When you write it, you will need to think about how you feel about death and dying.

WHY MAKE AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

- An Advance Directive speaks for you when you are unable to speak for yourself. It lists the treatments you want and do not want and chooses the person who will

make healthcare decisions for you. This may take some of the pressure off your family and help them to know what you want instead of trying to guess.

WHO MAKES AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

- You can make an Advance Directive if you are 18 years or older and of sound mind.

HOW DO I MAKE AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

- The state of Wisconsin recognizes two forms of Advance Directives. You can either fill out a Living Will or a Power of Attorney for Health Care form. You can get these forms from your doctor's office or from the Wisconsin Division of Health.
- You do not need a lawyer to fill out these forms but two people must witness you signing the forms. The forms explain who may or may not be a witness.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T MAKE AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

- If you cannot speak for yourself and have not made an Advance Directive, a doctor will usually ask your family, friends, or clergy. If your doctor is unsure, or if your family does not agree about the decision, your doctor may ask the courts to choose a person to make decisions for you. That person is called a guardian.

DOES MY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER HAVE TO FOLLOW MY ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVE?

- Some doctors and hospitals may have policies or beliefs that do not allow them to follow certain Advance Directives. It is important to make these people aware of your wishes and know if they will honor your Advance Directives.

WHAT IS A POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE?

- The Power of Attorney for health care form lets you choose another person to make health care decisions for you if you cannot make them yourself. This person is called your health care agent. They can decide things like whether or not you should have an operation, take certain drugs, or go on life support. There are some decisions your health care agent cannot make for you unless you give permission when you fill out the form. These decisions are listed on the form.
- When your health care agent makes decisions for you, they will consider what you would want and what they think is best. It is important to choose somebody who knows you well and to talk about your wishes.

- When you fill out the form, you can write specifically what you want or do not want, such as surgery or tube feedings.
- Once you have filled out the form, your health care agent cannot make decisions for you until two doctors agree, in writing, that you can no longer make decisions for yourself.

WHAT IS A LIVING WILL?

- A Living Will tells your doctor if you want to die naturally or not when you have a sickness or injury that cannot be healed. In other words, if your condition makes it impossible for you to communicate, the Living Will tells the doctor your decision to hook up or not to hook your body up to machines in order to keep you alive. The Living Will speaks for you when two doctors agree, in writing, that you are near death or in a permanent vegetative state and can no longer make decisions for yourself.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LIVING WILL AND A POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE?

- A Living Power of Attorney for health care is used when you can no longer make decisions about your care. You do not have to be close to death or in a vegetative state. It gives someone else the permission to make decisions for you.
- Will is used only when you are very close to death or when you are in a vegetative state. It decides whether or not you should be kept alive by machines.

SHOULD I HAVE BOTH A LIVING WILL AND A POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE?

- You do not have to both a Living Will and Power of Attorney for health care. If you do have both documents, you should make sure they do not conflict. If they do conflict, a doctor will follow the Power of Attorney for health care instead of the Living Will for all documents filled out after December 11, 1991.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND?

- You can cancel or replace a Living Will or Power of Attorney for health care at any time. The forms contain information about how to do this.

WHERE SHOULD I KEEP MY ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?

- You should keep your Advance Directive in a safe place where you and other people can easily find it. Do not keep it in a safe deposit box. Tell your family members and your lawyer, if you have one, that you have an Advance Directive and where you keep it. You should also ask your doctor to keep a copy of your Advance Directive in your permanent medical record.

WHO CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL HELP?

- Your doctor can help you understand your health needs and your options for treating those needs. He or she can also answer questions about Advance Directives.
- Lac Courte Oreilles Elder Center has trained facilitators who can help you think about your values, wishes and beliefs. The LCO Elder Center also offers information, assistance and notary services with Advance Directives, such as:
 - Power of Attorney for Health Care
 - Power of Attorney for Finances
 - Living Will
 - Final Disposition

POLICY AT LAC COURTE OREILLES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

- LCO Community Health Center supports and promotes the use of Advance Directives Power of Attorney for health care and Living Wills as documents that assist a person in planning for future health care decisions.
- The LCO Elder Center has information available describing an adult individual's right to accept or refuse medical or surgical treatment and to formulate an Advance Directive.
- Please let your nurse know if you would like any additional information. If you would like a copy of an Advance Directive form, you may contact:

LCO Elder Center
13878 W North Agency Road
Stone Lake, WI 54876
715-957-0076
- We will respect the patient's right to self-determination and work with the physician to honor the patients decisions. When the hospital's practice does not allow implementation of the patient's decision, we will assist with a safe and timely transfer to another institution.
- We will not deny care or otherwise discriminate against an individual based on whether or not the individual has completed an Advance Directive.

**YOU CAN FIND A FACILITATOR AT THE LCO ELDER CENTER
LOCATED AT:**

LCO Elder Center
13878 W North Agency Road
Stone Lake, WI 54876
715-957-0076

FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE PLEASE CALL ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Benefits Coordinator
715-957-0077

Aging and Disability Resource Specialist
715-957-0076

Aging Director
715-957-0027

GLITC Tribal Elder Benefit Specialist
800-472-7207 Ext 166

You can also contact your lawyer or the following groups if you have questions about Advance Directives:

- Wisconsin Division of Health
608-266-8475
- Center for Public Representation
608-251-4008
- Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long-term Care
(Ombudsman Program)
608-266-8944