

## Planning Ahead

As hard as it may be to talk about your end-of-life care, starting these conversations now is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and those who love you. Planning ahead can help you regain a sense of control over your life. It will also ease the burden on your family members if they ever have to carry out your wishes when you can't speak for yourself.

**You may want to begin by exploring some of these questions:**

*Where do you want to spend the end of your life? At home? In a nursing home? At the HospiceCare Center?*

*What would you like to do during the time remaining to you?*

*What would you like your last day of life to be like?*

*How would you like to manage your pain?*

*If you could no longer swallow, would you want to be artificially fed and hydrated?*

*Who would you like to be with you when you die?*

There are no right or wrong answers, and it's impossible to foresee every situation that might occur. However, simply talking with your loved ones can help you reach an understanding of your wishes about these end-of-life matters.

### Writing an Ethical Will

Your choices about your end-of-life care are personal and should be based on your own individual values and beliefs. One way to help identify these is to write an ethical will. This is not a legal document; instead, it is a personal communication, generally written as a letter, in which you share your deepest wishes and thoughts with your loved ones. Some themes you may want to explore in your ethical will are:

- Your personal and spiritual values and beliefs
- Hopes and blessing for future generations
- Life lessons
- Love and forgiveness

For help in writing your ethical will, visit [www.ethicalwill.com](http://www.ethicalwill.com) for examples and advice.

### Advance Directives

Advances in medical science have made it possible to keep patients alive even when multiple organs fail. These advances have also created some tough choices for all of us; choices you will want to make known now so that your loved ones can honor them if you should become unable to speak for yourself. The way to do this is to prepare an Advance Directive.

An Advance Directive is a legal document that allows you to give directions in advance for your medical care. A Living Will, Durable Power of Attorney or Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Directive are all examples of advance directives. Such directives are commonly used when decisions must be made about continuing life-sustaining treatment.

***Living Will***— A Living Will states the kind of medical treatment you want (or don't want) if you lose the ability to make decisions on your own.

***Durable Power-of-Attorney for Healthcare***—Under Colorado law, a Durable Power of Attorney allows you to name a person to make medical decisions for you if you should become unable to speak for yourself.

***Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Directive***—CPR is an emergency procedure consisting of artificial respiration and manual chest compressions. According to Colorado law, if 911 is called, the responding emergency personnel must perform CPR unless a directive is in place instructing “Do Not Resuscitate” (DNR). If you do not wish to be resuscitated, you, your family, or the loved one holding your Durable Power-of-Attorney for Healthcare must request “Do Not Resuscitate” (DNR) also known as “Allow Natural Death” (AND) orders from your physician.

You are not required to have an Advance Directive to receive hospice care, but it is strongly recommended.

