

Planning for Life: Advance Directives

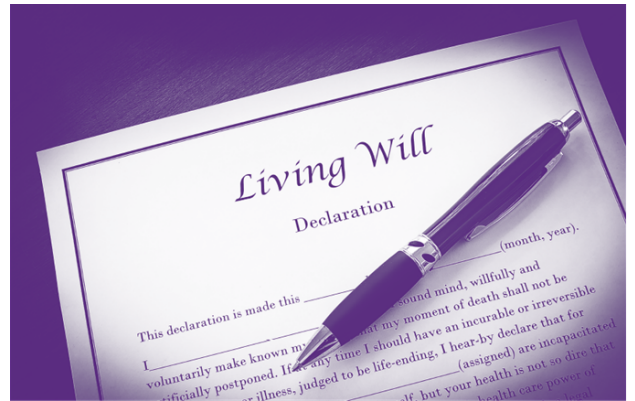
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One thing we can count on is life changing all the time. I was recently asked to present on Advance Directives and was reminded what an important topic it is. Though not always easy, providing some clarity for your family can be a great gift to them when an illness or injury does occur.

Advance directives are legal documents that give family, friends, and health care providers information about your end of life wishes. Having advance directives in place can help avoid confusion and stress in an emergency. It is not an overreaction to think about this and honestly, anyone 18 or older should consider putting these directives in writing.



The most common advance directives are:

- durable power of attorney for health care,
- living will, and
- pre-hospital do not resuscitate

In Kansas, an attorney is not needed to complete these documents but you must have witnesses sign them. Advance directives can be a difficult topic to both contemplate and discuss. Here are some steps to help.

- Gain more understanding of each option from your physician, health care providers, financial providers or your attorney.
- Take some time to contemplate your goals and wishes. One way to help others understand your wishes is to think about what your idea of good and bad critical care would look like for you.
- Discuss your personal preferences with family, friends or a religious advisor. At any point, you can change your preferences, and revise your documents.
- Designate several health care agents. If you only choose one, it may be the person who was injured or ill with you. These individuals can be designated in a particular order so only one person acts as the official agent at any one time.

To help people in thinking and talking about these issues, the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine, created a research based online resource called PREPARE, which is available in English and Spanish. This is a nice resource that breaks it down into several steps. You can watch/read about each step at your own pace so that it is not overwhelming.

Kansas specific and form fillable directives and wallet cards can be found here: <http://bit.ly/KSdirectives> and you may read more at: <https://bit.ly/3jtrb3q>. For more information, contact Tara Solomon-Smith, tsolomon@ksu.edu, or by calling 620-244-3826.