

# Advance Care Planning

Carer Support NSLHD

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Making decisions about your health care for the future

## Advance Care Planning

**Advance Care Planning** is thinking ahead about your preferences for health care treatment should you be seriously ill or injured. Having discussions about your preferences for care with your family members, friends, GP and health care professionals ensures your wishes are known if there comes a time when you are unable to make or communicate decisions for yourself.

### Why consider Advance Care Planning (ACP)?

- It encourages you to consider and discuss future or immediate treatment.
- It will make clear your treatment goals based on your understanding of your current health condition.
- It clarifies the things that give your life meaning and how you want to live for the rest of your life.
- It ensures your wishes are respected and that the religious, spiritual or cultural beliefs that may influence your wishes for medical treatment are known.

## Advance Care Directive (ACD)

An **Advance Care Directive, (ACD)** is a formal written record of you wishes, preferences and instructions about future medical treatment. It can play a critical role in reducing stress for you and your family when you are no longer able to make decisions. For this reason an **ACD** is sometimes referred to as a 'living will'.

## What does an Advance Care Directive look like?

There is no specific form in NSW, there are several examples available on the Advance Care Planning Australia website:

[www.advancecareplanning.org.au/resources](http://www.advancecareplanning.org.au/resources)

An ACD often contains:

- The person you would like contacted to make medical decisions
- Details of what is important to you about your values, life goals and preferred outcomes.
- Treatment and care you would like or refuse if you had a life-limiting illness or injury

## Why complete an Advance Care Directive?

An Advance Care Directive ensures your wishes are clearly known and followed. In a crisis your family may find it difficult to decide on what treatment is best.

An Advance Care Directive will help your family and doctors know what you want when you are not able to tell them yourself.



Health  
Northern Sydney  
Local Health District



## Where do I keep my Advance Care Directive?

You should keep your Advance Care Directive in a place that is easy for you or someone else to find it.

It is a good idea to leave a copy with your Person Responsible, family/carer, doctor and Health facility.

Make sure you know where all your copies are, if you change your Advance Care Directive you will need to replace all of the copies.

Your GP can arrange for your Advance Care Directive to be stored on your My Health Record

## When will my Advance Care Directive be used?

Your Advance Care Directive will only be used if you are unable to make, or communicate, your health care decisions.

Your Advance Care Directive will be stored in a prominent position in your medical record.

## Can I change my Directive?

Yes, it is recommended that you review your Advance Care Directive regularly and following a change in your health condition.

## Who is the 'Person Responsible'?

'Person responsible' is a legal term.

A 'person responsible' is able to consent or decline treatment being offered to you if you are too sick or injured to do this for yourself.

This person may be different to your 'contact person' or 'next of kin'.

Information contained in this brochure originated from Hunter New England Health Service; GP Network Northside; the benevolent society; North Coast Health Service and NSW Health.

If you are unable to make health care decisions a member of the health care team will contact your 'person responsible'.

The doctor caring for you will ensure the "person responsible" has been correctly identified according to the list below:

1. An Enduring Guardian (a person legally appointed by you). Your solicitor, registrar of the court of Office of the Public Guardian can help you appoint an enduring guardian should you wish.
2. Your most recent spouse, de facto or same sex partner with whom you have a close ongoing relationship.
3. A person who cares for you on a regular basis and is not paid to do this (Carer's Allowance is an exception).
4. A close friend or relative with whom you have an ongoing relationship.



## Where can I get more information?

If you need more information:

1. Your **GP**, or other health care professionals, can provide information related to your health.
2. Your **hospital ward** or hospital social worker.
3. The **Carer Support** internet site of Northern Sydney Local Health District  
[www.nscarersupport.com.au](http://www.nscarersupport.com.au)  
Phone: 9462 9488
4. The **NSW Government** Planning Ahead website:  
[www.planningaheadtools.com.au](http://www.planningaheadtools.com.au)
5. The **Office of the Public Guardian** has information about appointing an Enduring Guardian. Call 1800 451 510 or visit  
[www.publicguardian.justice.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.publicguardian.justice.nsw.gov.au/)
6. **Guardianship Tribunal** [www.gt.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gt.nsw.gov.au)
7. Your local **public library** who will be able to help you locate information on the intranet

## What do I do now?

- Learn about any health and ageing issues you may have.
- Think about your values and wishes for treatment.
- Identify your 'person responsible'? Consider legally appointing an Enduring Guardian/s.
- Talk to friends, family, GP about your values and wishes.