Advance Directives

If you are unable to speak for yourself, advance directives are helpful legal documents that give you a way to make your wishes known about your health care.

It is important for all adults to complete advance directives before they are faced with a serious illness or unexpected accident.

Be sure to tell your health care team if you have an advance directive, so they are aware and can honor your health care choices. Here are answers to some common questions about advance directives.

What are Advance Directives?

Advance directives tell your doctors and other health care workers what types of care you would like to have, and the person you would like to speak on your behalf, if you are not able to make medical decisions.

What is a Living Will?

A living will is a document that describes the type of medical treatment you want in certain situations. It is only used if you are terminally ill or permanently unconscious.

What is a DNR order?

A do not resuscitate (DNR) order is one type of advance directive. This order allows you to decide if you want to have cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or other treatment if your heart stops or if you stop breathing.
What is a Health Care Power of Attorney?

A health care power of attorney is another type of advance directive. This document lets your health care team know who you have chosen to speak on your behalf if you are unable to do so yourself.

Who should I tell about my Advance Directives?

Be sure to tell your health care team if you have an advance directive. It is a good idea to have a current copy with you for each hospital admission or doctor visit.

How can I make or change my Advance Directives?

You can change or make a new advance directive at any time. Simply destroy the old form and complete a new one. If you have questions or would like to fill out an advance directive, you may call the Social Work Department to help you.

- James Cancer Hospital Social Work at (614) 366-5119
- Wexner Medical Center Social Work at (614) 293-8427
- The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center East Hospital Social Work at (614) 257-3257

Office Hours: Weekdays 8:00am to 5:00pm

On the weekends, call the hospital operator at (614) 293-8000 and ask for Social Work assistance.

For more information on Advance Directives, we encourage you to visit our video library at http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos.