



Community Health Systems, Inc. (CHSI)

Advance Health Care Directive

INTRODUCTION TO YOUR CALIFORNIA ADVANCE HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE

This packet contains a legal document, a California Advance Health Care Directive that protects your right to refuse medical treatment you do not want, or to request treatment you do want, in the event you lose the ability to make decisions yourself.

Your California Advance Directive has five parts. Depending on your advance planning needs, you may complete any or all of the first four parts. However, **you must complete part 5.**

How do I make my California Advance Health Care Directive legal?

You must sign and date your advance directive or direct an adult to do so for you if you are unable to sign it yourself, either of which must be witnessed before a notary public or two adult witnesses.

Your two adult witnesses cannot be:

- your healthcare provider or an employee of your healthcare provider,
- the operator or an employee of a community care facility,
- the operator or an employee of a residential care facility for the elderly, or
- the person you have appointed as an agent, if you have appointed an agent.

In addition, one of your witnesses must be unrelated to you by blood, marriage, or adoption and not entitled to any portion of your estate.

If you are a patient in a skilled nursing facility when you execute your advance directive, one of your witnesses must be a patient advocate or ombudsman.

Whom should I appoint as my agent?

Your agent is the person you appoint to make decisions about your healthcare if you become unable to make those decisions yourself. Your agent may be a family member or a close friend whom you trust to make serious decisions. The person you name as your agent should clearly understand your wishes and be willing to accept the responsibility of making healthcare decisions for you.

Your agent cannot be:

- your supervising healthcare provider,
- the operator of a community care facility or residential care facility where you are receiving care, or
- the employee of a healthcare institution where you are receiving care or employee of a community care facility or residential care facility where you are receiving care, unless:
 - the employee is related to you by blood, marriage, or adoption,
 - the employee is your registered domestic partner, or
 - the employee is your coworker at the facility or institution.

You can appoint a second and third person as your alternate agents. An alternate agent will step in if the person(s) you name as agent is/are unable, unwilling, or unavailable to act for you.

Should I add personal instructions to my advance directive?

Yes! One of the most important reasons to execute an advance directive is to have your voice heard. When you name an agent and clearly communicate to them what you want and don't want, they are in the strongest position to advocate for you. Because the future is unpredictable, be careful that you do not unintentionally restrict your agent's power to act in your



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best interest. Be especially careful with the words “always” and “never.” In any event, be sure to talk with your agent and others about your future healthcare and describe what you consider to be an acceptable “quality of life”.

When does my agent’s authority become effective?

Ordinarily, your advance directive only becomes effective when you have been determined by your medical team to be unable to make your own decisions. In California, however, you have a choice between making your agent’s authority effective immediately or only after a physician determines and documents that you are unable to make decision on your own behalf. Even when you make your agent’s authority immediate, you retain the primary authority for your healthcare decisions as long as you are able to make your wishes known.

Agent Limitations

Your agent, if you appoint one, does not have authority to authorize convulsive treatment, psychosurgery, sterilization, or abortion, or to have you committed or placed in a mental health treatment facility.

Your agent will be bound by the current laws of California as they regard pregnancy and termination of pregnancies.

What if I change my mind?

Except for the appointment of your agent, you may revoke any portion or this entire advance directive at any time and in any way that communicates your intent to revoke. This could be by telling your agent or physician that you revoke, by signing a revocation, or simply by tearing up your advance directive.

In order to revoke your agent’s appointment, you must either tell your supervising healthcare provider of your intent to revoke or revoke your agent’s appointment in a signed writing.

If you execute a new advance directive, it will revoke the old advance directive to the extent of any conflict between the two documents.

Unless you specify otherwise, if you designate your spouse as your agent, that designation will automatically be revoked by divorce or annulment of your marriage.

Mental Health Issues

These forms do not expressly address mental illness, although you can state your wishes and grant authority to your agent regarding mental health issues. The National Resource Center on Psychiatric Advance Directives maintains a website (<https://nrc-pad.org/>) with links to each state’s psychiatric advance directive forms. If you would like to make more detailed advance care plans regarding mental illness, you could talk to your physician and an attorney about a durable power of attorney tailored to your needs.

What other important facts should I know?

Be aware that your advance directive will not be effective in the event of a medical emergency, except to identify your agent. Ambulance and hospital emergency department personnel are required to provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) unless you have a separate physician’s order, which are typically called “prehospital medical care directives” or “do not resuscitate orders.” DNR forms may be obtained from your state health department or department of aging (<https://www.hhs.gov/aging/state-resources/index.html>). Another form of orders regarding CPR and other treatments are state-specific POLST (portable orders for life sustaining treatment) (<https://polst.org/form-patients/>). Both a POLST and a DNR form MUST be signed by a healthcare provider and MUST be presented to the emergency responders when they arrive. These directives instruct ambulance and hospital emergency personnel not to attempt CPR (or to stop it if it has begun) if your heart or breathing should stop.