

Advance Directives

1. The Center, through the Medical Practice, shall provide all adult patients with written information concerning the individual's right under state law to make decisions concerning medical care, including the right to accept or refuse medical or surgical treatment and the right to formulate advance directives.
2. The patient (or surrogate decision-maker) shall sign an "Acknowledgement Form" indicating they have received such information. A signed copy of this form will be maintained in the patient's medical record.
3. The Center will maintain information about Advance Directives and copies of Georgia's "Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care" and "Living Will".
4. If, at admission, a patient's medical record does not contain any of the forms mentioned above, the admitting nurse will ask the patient or family member, if necessary, whether the patient has executed an advance directive document. If patient has not done so, information will be provided to the patient and a notation will be made in the medical record. If the patient has an advance directive, this will be documented. A copy will be placed in the patient's medical record if possible.
5. In the event a patient is already incapable of making medical decisions or incapable of communication at the time of admission, appropriate decisions shall continue to be made in the best interest of the patient through the conjoint efforts of the attending physicians, the patient's surrogate decision-maker or immediate family, and the care team.
6. It is understood that an adult patient has not executed or issued a directive, this does not create a presumption that the patient does not want a treatment decision to be made to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining procedures.
7. Although information will be provided to patients concerning advance directives and health care decisions, it shall not be construed as either medical or legal advice. Such consultation, if needed or desired, should be sought from a qualified physician or attorney.
8. Center staff who provide direct care or are involved directly with financial matters are not permitted to act as witnesses to advance directives completed by patients at the Center.
9. The Center will provide education for its staff members on issues relating to advance directives.
10. The content of an advance directive shall be transcribed as a physician's order and the chart appropriately flagged.
11. This policy is presented to every patient either at the time of scheduling or upon admission to the Center. A signed copy of this form acts as the "Acknowledgement Form"