

**Advance Directives:
Making Your Wishes Known – Types of Advance
Directives**

Narrator

When a loved one doesn't have an Advance Directive, making decisions on their behalf can be stressful. Mark Curran found that out when his elderly father got sick.

Mark Curran, Son

He didn't have advanced directives. Was sick, was in the hospital and my brother and sister and I had to make a decision whether to take him off life support or not. I wouldn't want to wish that on anybody.

Narrator

Advance Directives are **written, legal instructions** regarding your **preferences for medical care** if you **are unable to make decisions for yourself**.

There are different types of Advance Directives.

Eido Walny, Estate Planning Attorney

The two most common are living wills and health care powers of attorney.

A living will is a document where you simply dictate the medical decisions that affect you that you want to have done to you. So, for example you now can include Do not resuscitate remove me from a feeding tube if I'm in a persistent vegetative state. It's an order basically directly to the doctors.

Narrator

With a healthcare power of attorney, you name a close family member or friend to make medical decisions for you when you can't speak for yourself.

Sue Moser, Social Worker

This is the best way that you can say and put in writing who you trust and who you want to be your decision maker.

Narrator

After a cancer diagnosis, Becky Higgins created her Health Care Power of Attorney. She didn't hesitate to appoint her sister and her dad to carry out her wishes.

Becky Higgins, Patient

I trust them wholeheartedly and it makes me feel like my best interests will be looked out for because my family and the people I've chosen are there to make those for me.

Narrator

Organ donation is another type of Advance Directive.

Eido Walny, Estate Planning Attorney

It's just another opportunity for you to donate organs and give a little bit more direction than you would on, say, the back of your driver's license.

Dr. Michael Zimmerman, Transplant Surgeon

Anybody potentially can be an organ donor. With regard to what type of organ you could donate, I would tell them that the complication rates are very small and in general any organ is very safe.

Narrator

Organ donation is very personal to Mary Nachreiner. Weeks after her 16-year-old daughter, Kelly, registered to be an organ donor, she was killed in a car accident. Kelly's selfless act saved the lives of three other people. Mary believes organ/tissue donation is something everyone should consider.

Mary Nachreiner, Mother of an Organ Donor

If you or somebody you loved needed an organ or transplant to live would you accept it? And if that is a yes, I would certainly hope you would give considerable thought to being a donor as well.

Narrator

No matter how many details you choose to include, Advance Directives are an important step in making your wishes known, and something anyone 18 or older should have in place.

Eido Walny, Estate Planning Attorney

Advanced Directives are not necessarily just about death. Sometimes it's really a matter of you're at the hospital and unconscious and things are happening around you. And we need a little bit of guidance as to what you need.

Sue Moser, Social Worker

If you don't put it down on a paper it doesn't exist. So, it's very important to take the time before your surgery, before any event, before you need it.

Eido Walny, Estate Planning Attorney

This is a really nice opportunity to have what you want, be carried out and who wouldn't want that?

Narrator

Advance Directives forms vary state by state. Talk to a lawyer or visit your state government website to find the forms that will work for you.