



Getting Started With

Advance Directives.

A Guide for Arizonans



ARIZONA
Healthcare Directives
Registry


healthcurrent

Prepare Now. For Later.

Making decisions about critical and end-of-life healthcare can seem daunting. We're here to guide you.

Q. I have heard that having advance directives is important. How do I get started?

When you want to complete advance directives, you should start with a conversation. The first conversation can be with yourself. As you consider the following questions; write down your responses. This will keep your thoughts handy for reference and for sharing later. And, writing often helps us think things through.

- What matters to you?
- What does a good life or even a good death look like?
- Who can you count on in an emergency?
- Will that person follow through with your requests?
- Do you have an alternate person to help you in case your primary person is unavailable?
- What kind of advance directives do you need at this stage in your life?

After you have gathered your thoughts on the questions above, you are ready to discuss these questions with others, such as family or support individuals, your healthcare team, your faith leader, or other trusted advisors.

The Arizona Healthcare Directives Registry.

We collaborated with many end-of-life (EOL) industry leaders from across the state to launch a single destination where all Arizonans can learn about how to complete and register their advance directives.

Use this guide to making decisions and preparing your documents to be added to the registry.





Q. I have read that I should choose someone to be my healthcare decision maker in the event I become unable to communicate my wishes. Is this true, and how should I go about this?

Yes, it is important to choose someone to be your healthcare decision maker, and you can do this using a document called the Health Care Power of Attorney. The person you designate in this document is then known as your health care power of attorney (HCPOA) or “agent,” and will be your voice if you cannot speak for yourself.

In choosing someone to be your HCPOA, consider whether that person is:

- **Someone you can trust and who will be available** to your healthcare team. (Note that the individual does not have to live in the same state as you).
- **Someone willing to accept responsibility** for decisions around your care. If you ask someone to be your “agent” and they decline, this is not a reflection of your relationship. Instead, this person may not feel they have the emotional ability to direct your care during a time of crisis or to be accessible to your healthcare team.
- **Someone who understands your healthcare wishes and values**, and can honor and communicate them even if they do not reflect their own choices.

It is advisable to appoint only one person as your HCPOA and then to choose alternates in the event the first person is not available when

needed or becomes incapable of acting as your agent due to their own medical condition. Appointing multiple HCPOAs to make the decisions together, such as all your adult children, requires that they all or a majority agree, which may be difficult during a stressful event.

Q. Now that I’ve discussed my health-care preferences with family, is my next step completing advance directives documents?

Yes. Now that you’ve discussed and decided what is important to you regarding end-of-life or critical healthcare, the next step is to document your wishes. Don’t assume your loved ones or trusted decision makers can remember all of your preferences during a time of crisis. Documentation gives direction and guidance to your healthcare providers and decision makers when the time comes and when you are not capable of communicating your wishes.

You can document your healthcare decisions in several ways. You can:

1. **Work with an attorney or legal document preparer** to complete them. Attorneys and legal document preparers will charge a fee, in most cases, unless you are eligible to work with a legal advocacy program.
2. Obtain advance care documents from your healthcare provider.
3. **Download and complete them yourself.** If you choose to prepare the documents yourself, the Arizona Attorney General’s

website is a good place to start. The Life Care Planning section — which can be found at azag.gov/seniors/life-care-planning.com — has a free, downloadable [Life Care Planning Packet](#) that includes all four of the Arizona advance directive forms: Health Care Power of Attorney, Mental Health Care Power of Attorney, Living Will, and Pre-Hospital Directive Do Not Resuscitate (DNR). The packet also includes details on how to complete these forms and outlines requirements for witness or notarization.

Familiarize yourself with the different advance directive forms. In Arizona, the four documents that are considered advance directives include:



Health Care Power of Attorney:

A document that lets you choose another person, called an “agent,” to make healthcare decisions if you can no longer make those decisions for yourself. Unless the document includes specific limits, the agent will have broad authority to make any healthcare decision you would normally make for yourself. Health Care Power of Attorney documents do not provide for any financial decision-making powers.



Mental Health Care Power of Attorney:

A document that allows and directs your chosen agent to make decisions for you regarding behavioral health placement and treatment if

you no longer have capacity to do so yourself, due to mental or physical illness. You may be incapable of making decisions because of dementia, medication interactions, or a mental health diagnosis.



Living Will:

A living will outlines, in writing, your wishes regarding medical treatment in the event you are not able to communicate directly with your healthcare providers. It can also help guide your designated health care power of attorney (HCPOA), if you have elected one.



Pre-Hospital Directive (DNR):

A pre-hospital medical care directive is a document signed by you and a licensed healthcare professional that informs emergency personnel not to use means to resuscitate you. This is also referred to as a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate). If you have this form, EMTs and other emergency personnel will not use equipment, drugs, or devices to restart your heart or breathing, but they will not withhold other medical interventions necessary to provide comfort, care, or to alleviate pain. In Arizona, this document needs to be printed on orange paper.



Q. Do I need all four documents?

That answer depends on the stage of life you are in and your health status.

For example, a **Health Care Power of Attorney** is a document that everyone over the age of 18 should have. If you are under 18, your parents/guardians have the legal authority to make healthcare decisions for you. After 18, you can choose who would make these decisions for you.

If you have not completed a **Health Care Power of Attorney**, then the state designates through the next of kin laws who, and in what order, are the decision makers. The state's designated decision maker may not be who you would choose for yourself. This document is appropriate and necessary at any life stage.

A **Mental Health Care Power of Attorney** works in the same way, except that your chosen decision maker can make decisions around your behavioral treatment, if you are unable to make these decisions yourself. This document is appropriate and necessary at any life stage.

A **Living Will** is an important document for your health care provider and for your chosen healthcare decision maker. By listing some of the medical interventions or treatments that you want or don't want, you can help guide treatment and healthcare decisions based on your documented goals and preferences. You can document both what you want as well as what you would not want in different situations. This document is appropriate and necessary at any life stage.

A **Pre-Hospital Directive (DNR)** is most often used when you are at the end stage of life, are

frail, or you have an illness that would limit the success of CPR in your situation.

Q. I have completed my advance directive documents. What are the final steps?

Once you have completed your documents, you should register a copy with the Arizona Healthcare Directives Registry at Arizona Healthcare Directives Registry - Health Current.

By registering your documents, your health care provider can access them in a medical crisis or when you are not able to communicate for yourself. Registered health care providers will not need your individual account information in order to access your healthcare preferences. Additionally, you will want to share these with your healthcare providers, your family, and/or trusted decision makers and inform them that you have registered the documents with the Arizona Healthcare Directive Registry (AzHDR).

When there is a change in your health status or family situation, you will want to review these documents to ensure that they continue to reflect your wishes.

That's it! You did it. You have taken the steps to make sure your healthcare wishes are known and honored. Congratulations!

Wishes Registered. Wishes Honored.