

Idaho Advance Directive Questions & Answers

- ◆ **What is an Advance Directive?** An Advance Directive is a way for you to make your wishes about your own healthcare clear to others if, in the future, you are not able to speak for yourself. In Idaho, an Advance Directive includes two parts, the Living Will and the Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare.
- ◆ **What is a Living Will?** A Living Will is a document that tells doctors what to do if you are unable to speak for yourself. The Living Will takes effect when one medical doctor certifies that you have a terminal and incurable illness or are permanently unconscious (in a persistent vegetative state). A Living Will gives you three choices:
 - Choice 1—You want the doctors to do everything possible to keep you alive.
 - Choice 2—The only life-sustaining measures you want are artificial nutrition and/or hydration (food and water through tubes).
 - Choice 3—You want comfort measures only. You want to die a natural death.The choice is yours. No matter what you choose, you will always receive pain medication and care to keep you comfortable. The Living Will also includes a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare form.
- ◆ **What is a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare?** A Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare (also called a Healthcare Agent) lets you name a person to make your healthcare choices for you if you are not able to make them for yourself for any reason. You can name alternate decision makers as well.
- ◆ **What are life sustaining measures?** Life sustaining measures include cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), respirators or ventilators, kidney dialysis, artificial nutrition and hydration, vasoactive drugs, blood products, etc.
- ◆ **Is a Living Will different from an ordinary will?** Yes, a Living Will only tells what kind of healthcare you want to receive. It does not involve assets, estates, finances, trusts, guardians, and other legal issues.
- ◆ **Is a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare different than a Durable Power of Attorney for finances?** Yes, a Durable Power of Attorney for finances is only for financial and legal matters. A Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare is only for healthcare issues.
- ◆ **Does a Living Will need to be notarized or witnessed?** In Idaho, a Living Will form does NOT need to be notarized or witnessed. Some states do require this. It is important that you find out the laws for Living Wills in the state in which you reside.
- ◆ **Where should I keep my Advance Directives?** You should keep a copy of your signed Advance Directive at your home with your other important papers. You may also want to give a copy to your physician, your attorney, the hospital where you usually receive care and to the person named as your healthcare agent.
- ◆ **Is there a Registry for Advance Directives?** The Idaho Secretary of State Registry can keep a copy of your Advance Directives and/or POST form on file that can be accessed by emergency personnel. Information at: www.sos.idaho.gov/general/hcdr.htm
- ◆ **How can I be sure my wishes will be carried out?** It is the policy of Saint Alphonsus to carry out the wishes stated in correctly completed Advance Directives to the extent permitted by law.

- ◆ **Does it cost money to get a Living Will?** No, most healthcare providers can help you obtain and fill out a Living Will without charge.

- ◆ **What is a POST form?** A Physician Order for Scope of Treatment or POST form is appropriate if you have been diagnosed with an advanced chronic or terminal illness. A POST form signed by both you and your physician is a legal document that directs healthcare providers in any setting regarding your wishes.

- ◆ **What other resources are available to help me with Advance Directives?**

General information is available from the Saint Alphonsus Chaplaincy Department at 208-367-2121 and ask for the chaplain on call. Other good sources include:

Caring Connections at www.caringinfo.org

A Better Way Coalition at www.abetterwaycoalition.org

