

IE  HP

My Life. My Choice.

An Advance Care Directive is for everyone.



Plan today for your medical care tomorrow

Dear IEHP Member,

Thank you for your interest in Advance Care Directives. An Advance Care Directive (ACD) is a legal form that can help you make choices about future health care treatments. It lets you name a person to speak for you in the event you are not able to at any point in your life.

This folder has information about ACDs and answers common questions. We have also included an ACD form.

If you are not sure how to fill out this form, a step-by-step video can be found at the **Prepare for Your Care** website (www.prepareforyourcare.org) to help you. If you need this form in other languages like Spanish, Chinese, Farsi, Khmer, Korean, Russian, Tagalog and Vietnamese, it can also be found on the Prepare for Your Care website.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this form. After you complete it, please keep a copy for yourself, but most importantly, give a copy to your Doctor.

IEHP offers monthly Advance Care Planning workshops called “My Life, My Choice” at our Community Resource Centers, where you can get free in-person help with filling out the form.

Advance Care Planning (ACP) is a process of planning and setting goals about medical care treatment options in the event a person is not physically or mentally able to make them in the future. These options should be talked about often with the person who will make health care decisions for you and your Doctors. These discussions can begin at any point in a person's life, no matter the health status, and continue throughout the person's life.

Planning ahead helps your Doctors understand what you want, who you are as a person and offer options that are right for you.

An ACD is a legal form that allows you to:

- Give others guidelines about your future health care wishes.
- Name a person to be your agent (who will make health care decisions for you).
- Express your intentions about organ donation, autopsy, funeral or burial wishes.

In the state of California, the Living Will and Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care forms are combined into one form called an ACD.

Why you should have an ACD:

- Your values and treatment choices will be respected.
- Avoid needless pain, treatments that may not help or a hospital stay you don't want.
- Lessen your loved ones' burden and worry of deciding for you.
- Ease stress and limit conflict among loved ones.

Common questions about Advance Care Directives (ACD):

Question	Answer
Who can fill out an ACD?	Adults over 18 years old who are of sound mind can fill out an ACD. You do not need a lawyer to fill it out.
Who decides my medical treatment?	Your Doctors will inform you about treatment and options. But you will decide on the treatment you want. Doctors cannot decide for you.
What if I am too sick to decide?	If you are too sick to decide, your Doctor will ask for your closest available family member or friend to help decide what is best for you. It is best to talk about your wishes ahead of time with your agent, so they know how to decide.
Who can I choose to be my agent?	You can choose any adult you trust. This person will speak on your behalf when you are too sick to do so. You can list this person on the first part of your ACD form.
How do I make the form legal?	To make the form legal and legally valid in the state of California, you must sign it and have it either: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Signed by two witnesses (the form will tell you who can be a witness), OR• Notarized

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Common questions about Advance Care Directives (ACD):

Question	Answer
Does an ACD expire?	<p>Once completed, an ACD does not expire. The truth is the planning process continues throughout life. It's a good idea to review your ACD to make sure it still reflects your wishes, especially when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You have aged 10 years• There's a divorce• You have a new health diagnosis• A loved one dies• You are no longer able to do the things you used to
What if I change my mind after I complete an ACD?	<p>As we mature, face new health challenges, or have different family experiences, our values, goals and priorities can change. Any changes you make to your ACD need to be shared with your agent and family. Changes can be about treatment options, where to get care, organ donation or a new agent. Give the new form to your agent and Doctors, and destroy all the old forms.</p>
Can I use my ACD in a different state?	<p>Each state has its own laws for ACD. If you spend a lot of your time in a state other than California, consider completing an ACD for that state.</p>

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Common questions about Advance Care Directives (ACD):

I'm not sick, so why do I need to have an ACD?	You can never be “too healthy” or “too young” to make an ACD. None of us knows when or under what circumstances we may not be able to make our own choices about the care we want and the care we do not want. Younger adults should have at least an ACD that appoints an agent.
Will I still be treated if I do not fill out an ACD?	YES! You will still get full medical treatment. Just know that if you get so sick that you cannot decide your care, someone else will have to decide for you. This person may not know what you want or value.
How can I learn more about ACD?	To learn more, you can attend a “My Life, My Choice” class at your nearest IEHP Community Resource Center. Classes are offered monthly. Visit www.iehp.org for more information.

What else do I have to know about making future health care choices?

According to the 1990 Health Care Decisions Act, a person has a legal right to control their health care choices, including whether to have life support or not. Sadly, every family must face the possibility of serious illness in which important choices must be made. It is never too early to think about these choices and discuss them with your family and Doctors.

As a patient, it is up to you to decide and inform your agent, family and Doctors if you have completed an ACD and give them a copy of it. When you check into a hospital or other health facility, bring a copy of your ACD so that it is added to your medical record.

Forms used in Advance Care Planning

An ACD is a legal form that all adults over 18 years should have. This form helps guide future medical care in cases when you are not able to speak for yourself.

The form:

- Names a person who can relay your medical wishes to others.
- Tells your loved ones and medical staff what type of future treatment you want or don't want in writing.

The image shows the cover page of the California Advance Health Care Directive form. The title is "California Advance Health Care Directive" with the IEHP logo. Below the title, it states: "This form lets you have a say about how you want to be cared for if you cannot speak for yourself." It then lists three parts: "Part 1 Choose a medical decision maker, Page 3", "Part 2 Make your own health care choices, Page 7", and "Part 3 Sign the form, Page 13". It also includes instructions: "You can fill out Part 1, Part 2, or both. Fill out only the parts you want. Always sign the form in Part 3. 2 witnesses need to sign on Page 14, or a notary on Page 15." At the bottom, there is a line for "Your Name" and the PREPARE logo.

Even with an ACD, emergency staff are required by law to do what they can to save a person's life, including CPR and using a breathing machine.

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)

The POLST:

- Is not an ACD.
- Translates patient preferences into medical orders.
- Tells emergency staff what to do. This order must be followed.
- Most appropriate for people with a serious illness or advanced frailty.

The image shows a sample of a Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form. The form is titled "Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)" and includes sections for "A. Patient's Preferences", "B. Medical Interventions", "C. Resuscitation", and "D. Hospice and Palliative Care". It contains checkboxes and text boxes for indicating patient preferences and medical orders.

Differences between POLST and Advance Directives Forms:

	POLST Form	Advance Directive
Type of document	Medical order	Legal document
Who completes it?	Doctor	Patient
Who needs one?	Patients who have a serious illness (any age) or advanced frailty near the end of life	All adults
Does it appoint an agent?	No	Yes
What is communicated?	Specific medical orders	General wishes about treatment
Is it easy to find?	Yes, most of the time. Patient has an original, a copy is placed in their medical record and one travels with them.	No. It depends where the person keeps the form, if they told someone about it or gave copies to their agent or Doctor.
Can emergency staff follow it?	Yes	No

Source: *polst.org*

What if I want to use a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) form?

A DNR can also be used with an ACD. The form informs emergency staff that a person does not want CPR, their heart started (with a defibrillator or drugs) or help to breathe (by using a tube or oxygen). The form does **not** affect giving life support measures like artificial nutrition or other forms of emergency medical care like treating pain, trouble breathing, major bleeding or other medical conditions. These measures can be noted in an advance care directive.


The DNR form must be signed by the patient and Doctor. Once completed, the DNR form should be clearly posted near the patient. If you think this form is for you, discuss it with your Doctor at your next office visit.

IEHP ACD Wallet Card

So, you have finished your ACD, named a person to speak for you and given copies to your Doctor and family. Having a copy of your ACD with you at all times is best, but not often practical.

The ACD Wallet Card is a simple way to let others know you have an ACD. The card can help make sure the right people are called in case of a health emergency to help with decisions about your care.

Fill out the enclosed card and carry it with you at all times.

MY LIFE. MY CHOICE. MI VIDA. MIS DECISIONES.	I HAVE AN ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVE <i>TENGO INSTRUCCIONES ANTICIPADAS SOBRE ATENCIÓN MÉDICA</i>
	IEHP Member ID / ID del Miembro de IEHP
	Name / Nombre
	Phone / Teléfono
	Date of birth / Fecha de Nacimiento
	Primary Care Doctor / Doctor de Cuidado Primario
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Want to know more?

If you need help, ask to speak with an IEHP Health Education Department Team Member at **1-800-440-4347**.

Online Resources

- **IEHP.org** – Download the free, easy-to-read **PREPARE™** form.
- **Prepareforyourcare.org** – See step-by-step videos on how to fill out your **PREPARE™** form. Download this form for your state in nine other languages.
- **POLST California - *capolst.org*** – This site provides information to patients and caregivers about POLST. The form is available in 12 other languages.
- **Organ donation information - *donatelifecalifornia.org*** – Get more information about how organ donation works, what organs you can donate and sign up to be a donor.



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