

What information is usually found in an Advance Directive (AD)?

Information in an AD may include:

- your wishes and preferences about health care and treatment
- the name and telephone number of your proxy or substitute decision-maker(s) (in the AD's proxy directive)
- a statement of personal goals or values you wish to guide decision making
- any other information you wish those who provide your health care to have

How do I make my Advance Directive?

We encourage you to talk about your wishes with the people you are close to and the people who provide your health care. It is important to ask questions, be informed, and understand your choices when you make your AD. Please ask for assistance and any member of the hospital medical staff will be glad to help you. Remember that the AD must be:

- easy to read
- signed and dated by you
- signed by two witnesses

You are welcome to use the sample AD form available from the hospital and provided by the BHB Quality and Risk Department. The use of this AD form is endorsed by the Bermuda Hospitals Board (BHB).

Do I need a lawyer to make my Advance Directive?

You do not need a lawyer to make an AD. However, it is a good idea to tell your lawyer as well as your substitute decision-maker, the people you are close to, and those who provide your health care about your AD. This will help ensure your wishes in the AD are known and respected.

When will my Advance Directive be used?

Your written AD will only be used when you are unable to make or express your health care decisions on your own.

Where do I keep my Advance Directive? Who should have a copy?

Your original AD should be kept with other important documents in a safe place. If a substitute decision-maker has been named, you should also give them a copy. Your family doctor should be given a copy of your AD, and a copy should be given to the hospital. The Medical Records department of the hospital (Hospital Information Management Systems, or HIMS) will keep your AD in your medical files so that it can be readily available if needed. You can hand over a copy of your AD to the HIMS department, but it is recommended that you also give a copy to a member of the medical staff upon each admission to the hospital.

What if I have questions about Advance Directives?

If you are being treated at BHB, ask a doctor or another member of your medical team for assistance or to refer you to someone who can help you, or seek advice from your physician or lawyer.

What if I change my mind about my wishes?

As long as you have capacity, i.e. you are able to understand the implications (including the risks and benefits) of your decision, you can change or cancel your AD at any time, either in writing or verbally. The people who provide your health care and your substitute decision-maker should be told about any changes you have made.

If you wish to change your AD, ask a member of the BHB medical staff for a new AD form to be completed and signed by you in the presence of at least one witness.

If you wish to cancel your AD, you can do so by:

- writing a new AD; or providing a written statement signed by you stating you want to cancel your AD; or
- providing an oral statement to medical staff in the presence of a witness stating your wish to cancel your AD; or
- destroying your AD or directing some other person in your presence to destroy your AD.

What if I am concerned about my experience with an Advance Directive in BHB?

You may contact a member of the Quality and Risk Management Department to discuss your concerns.



Peace Of Mind **Life** Questions **Help** Prepared **Provisions**
Planning **Security** Responsibility **Advice** Legal **Care**
Future Protected **Choices** **Decisions** Concerns **Assistance**

What is advance care planning?

Advance care planning is making decisions now about your future health care and treatment. It usually involves talking with your family or loved ones about your wishes. It may also include talking to your family doctor, others who provide your health care and your lawyer.

You may decide you want to write down your wishes and preferences about the kind of health care and treatment you would prefer if you ever become too ill to speak for yourself. This written document is called an Advance Directive (AD) or Health Care Directive.

You may decide to just have a trusted friend or family member designated to make health care and treatment decisions for you, in the event you become too ill to express yourself. This person is called your Health Care Proxy (Power of Attorney) or Substitute Decision-maker.

BHB supports the use of an AD provided it is consistent with professional standards of care, other BHB policies and the law. This is one important way that BHB supports open and honest communication between patients and the people who provide their health care.

Why should I consider making an Advance Directive?

Having an AD helps ensure that your wishes about your health care and treatment are understood and respected when you cannot speak for yourself. It also reassures others that they are following your wishes.

Making an AD gives you the opportunity to talk about what kind of health care and treatment you want with people who are close to you (such as your partner and family or loved ones) and people who provide your health care (such as doctors and nurses).

*“Ethics is about the ways we do,
and should, treat each other.”*



Quality and Risk Management Department: 441.239.1553

Ethics Consultation Hotline: 441.291.4673

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Let's Talk About Advance Directives

A Guide to Advance Care Planning

BHB ETHICS COMMITTEE

King Edward VII Memorial Hospital



Bermuda Hospitals Board



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