



## **Patient Information Regarding Advance Directives**

### **Federal Law**

The 1990 Patient Self-Determination Act is a federal law that says patients must be informed of their rights under state law to make decisions about their medical care, including the right to accept or refuse medical or surgical treatment and the right to have an advance directive. The advance directive document is a way for you to communicate what kinds of medical care and treatment you do or do not want if you become unable to make these decisions for yourself.

### **Wyoming Law**

#### **What is the Wyoming Advance Health Care Directive?**

The power of an advance health-care directive is that it speaks when you cannot. It is your opportunity to control your wishes for healthcare treatment by using a legal document that will be recognized by health care providers in Wyoming.

Under the Wyoming Health Care Decisions Act of 2005, as amended in 2007, the Wyoming Legislature authorized a combined advance health-care directive. Before this law was enacted, three separate forms often were required, and there were many different versions of these forms available, which often led to confusion.

#### **What does it do?**

The Wyoming Advance Health Care Directive is a legal document that allows you to:

- Name an agent to make health-care decisions for you if you become incapable of communicating or making your own decisions
- Name an alternate agent in case your first choice is not able, willing or reasonably available to make decisions on your behalf
- Designate the level of decision-making power of your agent(s)
- Give specific instructions on whether to continue or withhold or withdraw treatment, including nutrition or hydration, as well as pain relief
- Express whether you wish for your bodily organs and/or tissue to be donated upon your death
- Allows you to provide information about your health care provider

Advance directive forms are available at the Wyoming State Health Department web site:  
<http://www.health.wyo.gov/aging/resources/advance.html>



## **Living Will**

A living will is an advance directive that allows you to specify or limit the kinds of life-prolonging procedures you wish to receive if you become terminally ill and unable to make medical decisions. It is a voluntarily executed document put into writing and signed by the person making the declarations (or his/her representative if the patient is unable to sign) and signed in the presence of at least two witnesses.

## **Health Care Representative or Agent**

A health care representative or agent document is an advance directive that allows you to name someone else to make your health care decisions for you should you become unable to make health care decisions. You should tell this person of your wishes about refusing or stopping care, as well as matters of more routine care. This type of advance directive can relate to any medical situation, not just terminal illness.

## **Power of Attorney for Health Care**

A power-of-attorney for health care document is another advance directive that allows you to name someone else to make your health care decisions for you if you become unable to make your own health care decisions. Instructions about treatment preferred or treatment to be avoided can also be included. This type of advance directive relates to any medical situation, not just terminal illness. This type of advance directive might also be called a health care proxy, or durable power of attorney for health care.

## **Wyoming Endoscopy Center**

Compliance with the 1990 Patient Self-Determination Act is intended for inpatient hospital admissions, and care received from a nursing facility, home health agency, personal care service, hospital or health maintenance organization, and not for outpatient surgery centers. Wyoming Endoscopy Center does not honor advance directives. Health care providers at the Wyoming Endoscopy Center are bound to do all in their power to assure the safe recovery of every patient, including resuscitation if that becomes necessary. All adult patients are asked if they have an advance directive, which is placed in their medical record. Adult patients are also informed that an advance directive will not be honored while a patient is at Wyoming Endoscopy Center.