

Medical Decisions

- A **Health Care Proxy** is a legal document designates a person who will make health care decisions only if you are unable to make them yourself. Because it is difficult to know all the choices that will need to be made, it is important to appoint someone you trust and who knows your core values. Be sure that every one of your medical providers has a copy of this proxy, keep a copy at home, and send a copy to your attorney, if you have one. It's also a good idea to think about naming an alternate proxy, in the event your primary proxy can't perform their duties; make sure both individuals are unified around you and your expressed desires.
- A **Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST)** form outlines your wishes for the end of life in the event you cannot make this decision yourself. If you do not have a Health Care Proxy, this document will guide medical decisions. If you do have a Health Care Proxy, this document can guide their choices on your behalf.
- A **Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR)** determines what life sustaining measures, if any, you would like if your heart has stopped beating and you are not breathing. While a DNR can stand alone, it is also a part of the more comprehensive MOLST form.

Financial Decisions

- A **Durable Power of Attorney** names someone to make financial decisions when you can no longer do so. If finances are complicated or there are exceptions to the use of your money, this document can be drawn up by a lawyer.
- A **will** indicates how your assets and estate will be distributed upon death. The person you name within your will as the executor is responsible for ensuring your wishes are met. Your will may also specify arrangements for care of minors, gifts to loved ones or favorite charities, and funeral and/or burial arrangements
- A **living trust** provides instructions about the person's estate and appoints someone, called the trustee, to hold title to property and funds for the beneficiaries. A living trust can provide a detailed plan for property disposition.

Put together important documents and information so that they are easy to access in a time of stress or uncertainty. Among items to consider putting together in a safe place, ideally in a fireproof box:

- Bank account numbers, both checking and savings
- Insurance policies
- Investment account details
- Safe deposit box keys
- Social security card and other identification like birth certificates and passports
- Utility and other monthly billing information
- Mortgage, deed, or lease for your home or residence
- Vehicle title
- Internet account numbers and passwords, including subscriptions and email accounts
- Important phone numbers for family members, your lawyer, doctor, and financial planner, pastor or priest, and your preferred funeral home.
- ...and don't forget to travel with your MOLST/DNR documents if in a precarious situation



Dr. Lucia Jander joined Hospicare as Medical Director in January 2020. Dr. Jander believes strongly in the value and philosophy of hospice and palliative care and wishes that all of health care used this interdisciplinary model as it gives patients the best chance of having their social, medical, and spiritual needs met.

Having the Conversations...

Although end-of-life planning is critical for adults at every age, it can be difficult to find a way to introduce the topic of conversation to your loved ones.

Try to remember that by having the dialogue, you are doing your loved ones a favor because they won't have to guess your wishes.

A Living Will is a legal document that you can provide to your loved ones and your health care proxy to explain your decisions about your end of life. A document like "**5 Wishes**" can help you think about medical, emotional and spiritual questions, providing a structure for you to reflect on these issues and start the conversation with your health care proxy, other medical providers, and your family.

Here are some ways to start the conversation:

- There's been something on my mind and now is a good time to bring it up
- You can count on me to be there for you
- I want to do the right things for you when you need them the most
- I don't know your wishes so please tell me them so I can honor them whether I agree with them or not
- You matter to me and I care about you

"Death is a part of life, and planning for it can make all the difference to the emotional health of those you leave behind." - Dr. Jander

Other Resources

Health Care Proxy:

- Download form - <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/1430.pdf>

MOLST:

- Download form - <https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-5003.pdf>

DNR:

- Download form - <https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-3474>

Five Wishes:

- Download sample form - <https://fivewishes.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/product-samples/fwsample.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Do Your Own Will - doyourownwill.com

Cake - An easy way to way to discover, store, and share your end-of-life preferences. joincake.com

Community Resource Finder - Alzheimer's Association resource. communityresourcefinder.org

Law Help - Pro bono solutions to legal problems. lawhelp.org

National Academy of Elder Law Lawyers - naela.org

My Living Voice - help with your advance directive. vitaldecisions.mylivingvoice.com

If you need help connecting to resources, or ideas for how to start this process for yourself, please contact us at Hospicare. We are here to support residents of Cortland and Tompkins counties, and we speak to individuals and groups about the importance of end-of-life planning. Our goal is always to make your wishes are expressed and respected, so email info@hospicare.org or call 607-272-0212 with any questions.

Hospicare uses an interdisciplinary team approach to providing care to patients, families and caregivers in Tompkins and Cortland counties. We provide emotional, medical and spiritual support, and patients have access to care from physicians, nurses, social workers, grief counselors, home health aides and volunteers. It's never *too* early to ask questions.

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hospicare.org



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