

## Terms Often Encountered in End of Life Issues

**Advanced Care Planning:** A process that enables individuals to make plans about their future health care.

**Advanced directive:** A legal document in which a person specifies general guidelines (and sometimes specific actions to be taken or not to be taken) to guide health care decisions to be made on the person's behalf if they are no longer able to make decisions for themselves because of illness or incapacity. Can also include statement of desires about organ donation, autopsy and burial wishes.

**Health Care Proxy:** The person who is legally appointed to make a person's health care decisions if they can no longer make them for themselves. This person is sometimes referred to as a health care agent.

**Health Care Proxy Form:** A legal document wherein a person designates their health care proxy.

**Durable Power of Attorney:** A legal document in which a person appoints a person they trust to manage their money, property and financial matters, including such time as the person might become disabled or incapacitated and is unable to effectively manage their financial matters themselves.

**Living Will:** A written advanced directive that lists or describes specific treatments a person would or would not want under various circumstances. It tends to focus on specific interventions but the term can also refer to an advanced directive more generally.

**Halachic Living Will:** A written advanced directive that expresses one's desires that end-of-life decisions will be made in accordance with Jewish laws and customs. It includes the listing of the name of one's rabbinic authority to confer on all such matters.

**Ethical Will:** A document one writes as a means of passing on to future generations one's values, memories, life lessons, advice and hopes for the future.

**Five Wishes:** An Advanced Directive created by Aging with Dignity that includes wishes for spiritual and emotional care in addition to medical care at end of life.

**The Conversation Project:** A public engagement initiative with a goal to have every person's wishes for end-of-life care expressed and respected. They host many excellent and accessible tools on their website, especially around how to have difficult conversations with others.

**CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation):** An emergency procedure used to revive people if their heart has stopped beating.

**DNR (Do Not Resuscitate):** A hospital-based medical order written by a physician or advanced practitioner that instructs medical personnel not to perform CPR if a patient's breathing stops or their heart stops beating. This order is based on a patient's explicit direction (or via an advanced care directive or health care proxy).

**MOLST (Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment):** A set of medical orders that defines what life-sustaining treatments a patient wants to receive and/or avoid. It is signed by a patient and their physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. The MOLST is a portable medical order form that must be honored by emergency medical personnel and all healthcare professionals in all settings. They are completed after thorough discussion between the patient (or health care proxy) and their healthcare provider. This discussion focuses on the patient's current health status, prognosis, goals and preferences for treatment and, critically, what matters most to the patient. While all adults should have advance directives, the MOLST form is typically offered to those with complex medical conditions, whether chronic or a new diagnosis with a poor prognosis.

**Palliative Care:** Treatment to prevent or relieve pain and suffering and to improve a patient's quality of life, physically, emotionally and spiritually. It is recommended for patients at any stage of a life-threatening or chronic illness. The intent is not to treat or cure disease, but to ease any symptoms and side effects one might experience while preparing for, undergoing, and recovering from treatment as well as once treatment is over.

**Hospice:** A facility or program that provides palliative care to people who are terminally ill. Most hospice care is provided at home, by a team of professionals. Hospice can also be provided to patients in nursing homes and some hospitals. In addition, there are some residential hospices.

**Palliative Sedation:** Relieving suffering in a patient by sedating them, sometimes to the point of unconsciousness, when other ways to end suffering have been unsuccessful.

**Artificial Nutrition and Hydration:** Providing food and fluids to patients when they are unable to eat, usually via a feeding tube or intravenously.