

Glossary of terms

Advance care planning: a discussion with your loved ones about your goals and values for future health care needs. An advance care plan provides information to others about your wishes in case illness or injury prevents you from telling them yourself.

Advance directive (health care directive/living will): advance directives are the plans you make for future health care in the event you become unable to make these decisions yourself. These plans can be verbal but are usually in writing. It is easier to communicate these plans if you put them in writing.

Antibiotics: medications used to fight infections. Used to treat illnesses or relieve symptoms.

Artificial nutrition and hydration: when a person can no longer eat or drink, liquid fluids can be given by tube.

Capacity: the ability to take in information, understand its meaning and make an informed decision using the information. Capacity varies by task. The capacity to choose a trusted individual as an appropriate health care agent differs from the capacity to agree to a medical procedure or treatment.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR): attempts to restart breathing and the heartbeat of a person who has no heartbeat or has stopped breathing. CPR involves “mouth-to-mouth” breathing and forceful pressure on the chest to restart the heart. Usually involves electric shock (defibrillation) and a plastic tube down the throat into the wind pipe to assist breathing (intubation).

Comfort measures: medical care provided with the primary goal of keeping a person comfortable rather than prolonging life. Comfort measures are used to relieve pain and other symptoms.

Dialysis: a treatment that does some of the things done by healthy kidneys. It is needed when your own kidneys can no longer take care of your body’s needs.

Frail elder: an older person who has trouble performing activities of daily living because of weakness or fatigue. Frail elders are vulnerable to acute illness due to low activity level.

Health care proxy form: the form used to designate an “agent” (also called the health care proxy). Your agent makes health care decisions on your behalf only if you are unable to make decisions yourself.

For more
information, call
651-635-9173 or
1-800-261-0879



**ALLINA HOME &
COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Allina Hospitals & Clinics

Advance Care Planning
1055 Westgate Drive, Suite 100
St. Paul, MN 55114

(continued...)

Intravenous (IV) fluids: a small plastic tube (catheter) is inserted directly into the vein and fluids are given through the tube.

Intubation/intubate: placing a tube down an individual's windpipe to assist in breathing. Intubation is followed by mechanical ventilation.

Intubation and mechanical ventilation: mechanical ventilation is used to support or replace the function of the lungs. A ventilator (or respirator), is a machine attached to a tube inserted through the nose or mouth and into the windpipe, forces air into the lungs. Mechanical ventilation is often used to assist a person through a short-term problem or for prolonged periods in which irreversible respiratory failure exists. Some people on long-term mechanical ventilation are able to enjoy themselves and live a quality of life that is important for them. For the person dying however, mechanical ventilation often merely prolongs the dying process until some other body system fails. It may supply oxygen but it can not improve the underlying condition.

Living will: a form permitting you to state your wishes ahead of time in case you develop a terminal, irreversible condition that prevents you from making and communicating your wishes. Although not a legal state form, the living will provides the "clear and convincing evidence" needed to have your wishes carried out.

POLST: Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment was started in Oregon in the early 1990's to improve the quality of medical care provided by turning people's wishes regarding life sustaining treatments into medical orders.

Tube-feeding (enteral): providing fluids and/or nutrition by way of a tube placed into the stomach or intestines. On a short-term basis, the tube (nasogastric tube or NG tube) is placed into the nose, down the throat and into the stomach. For the long-term, the tube is placed directly into the stomach (gastric or G tube).

To assist you in the advance care planning process, Allina has trained facilitators to assist you and your health care agent in having advance care planning discussions and developing an advance care plan.

Call the Allina Care Navigation Help Desk at 651-635-9173 or 1-800-261-0879 to meet with an advance care planning facilitator.

For more
information, call
651-635-9173 or
1-800-261-0879