



## Advance Care Planning Service

You Decide, Plan Ahead!

### Advance Care Planning

Advance Care Planning provides a clear process for talking about and writing down your preferences for future health care in case you become unable to make decisions about your medical treatment. The choices you make through this process only come into operation if you lose that ability. The decisions you make now, will then guide your family and doctors to make the right decisions about the best medical care for you. The best time to do Advance Care Planning is now while your health is stable and you can think clearly about your wishes and what is important to you.

### What does Advance Care Planning Involve?

There are two different documents and it is important to think about completing both.

1. Medical Treatment Decision Maker
2. Advance Care Directive

### What is a Medical Treatment Decision Maker?

This is a legal form that allows you to appoint another person (your agent) to make medical treatment decisions on your behalf in the event that you become unfit to make decisions for yourself. Your agent is not authorised to make non-medical (e.g. financial) decisions for you. Similarly, a General or Financial Power of Attorney is not authorised to make decisions about your medical treatment. It is best to choose an person who you trust, who knows you well, who is willing to respect your views and values and who is willing to make decisions under circumstances that may be stressful. A relative or a close friend may be a good choice. It is important that the person you select agrees to speak for you and that you have discussed with them what you would like future medical treatment if you were unable to speak for yourself. Make sure that your wishes are written clearly in an Advance Care Directive and that they have an up to date copy. You can change either your Medical Treatment Decision Maker or Advance Care Directive at any time.

### What is an Advance Care Directive?

You can choose to write down your preferences about future health care in a document called an Advance Care Directive. This document has also been known by other names such as a 'Living Will' or 'Health Directive'. It is still very important to discuss your wishes with your medical treatment decision maker (see above), close family and doctor. The document is designed to remind them of how you wish to be cared for if you become seriously ill, injured or incapacitated. It serves as an important guide to assist them in making the right decisions for you if that becomes necessary.

## What will an Advance Care Directive do?

An Advance Care Directive can convey your personal values, beliefs and preferences regarding but not limited to: care in case of serious irreversible illness; any unacceptable situations where you would not want life prolonging treatments commenced or continued; specific medical treatments you would agree to receive or want to avoid in the future; any non-medical or personal care wishes to be followed if you were suffering from the advanced stages of a life limiting condition.

## Why would I want an Advance Care Directive?

Completing your Advance Care Directive will give you the peace of mind that comes when you know your future health needs will be met in the way you would want. Having your wishes in writing is also a comfort to your family and friends as it guides them to fulfil your wishes during a difficult time. Remember, it is only when your wishes are clearly known by those who will care for you that they can be respected.

## How do I complete my Advance Care Plan?

If you decide to plan ahead, your next step is to contact Peninsula Health for a free Advance Care Planning consultation with an experienced health practitioner. An Advance Care Planning Clinician can give you detailed information and guidance to discuss and complete the necessary documents.

## Phone ACCESS

Phone the ACCESS line on 1300 665 781 to arrange a face to face consultation with an Advance Care Planning Clinician.

## Further Information

Information is also available online.

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care/advance-care-planning>

Disclaimer: The information contained in the brochure is intended to support, not replace, discussion with your doctor or health care professionals.

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