## LIVING WILLS AND ADVANCE CARE DIRECTIVES: THE DIFFERENCES

## LIVING WILLS

A living will, originally designed to be completed when a person was diagnosed with a terminal illness, is an earlier version of an advance care directive document that tells a doctor how a patient wants to be treated.

## ADVANCE DIRECTIVES OR ADVANCE CARE PLANS

Advance directives or advance care plans for health care replaced living wills. They are written in greater detail than a living will and list a health care agent to make sure instructions are followed. This is important because the directive supports a person's right to make their own health care decisions. Advance directives help people state their treatment choices before they reach a condition when they cannot. Planning involves several steps to help people learn about options available for end-of-life care; determine which types of care best suit their wishes; and share their wishes with family, friends and physicians.

Advance care plan forms can be found on the Tennessee Department of Health website. Completed, signed and notarized copies of the plan should be given to a health care agent, successor agent, patient's doctor, trusted friend, spouse, son or daughter.

## **APPOINTMENT OF A HEALTH CARE AGENT**

Before individuals are too sick to make health care decisions for themselves, a health care agent can be appointed. A health care agent carries your message, your specific instructions about the type of care you want to receive. Individuals select friends, family members, an attorney, and sometimes a minister to be their health care agent.



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