

What do I do with my completed Advance Care Plan?

When you have completed your plan you should ensure that people who need to know about your plan are aware of it. It is important that significant people in your life, such as family, friends and your GP, get a copy of your plan. It is also important that the local hospital has a copy as well so that they can be aware of your wishes if you are admitted to hospital. If possible, you should bring your plan with you if you are admitted to hospital.

Can I change or revoke my Advance Care Plan?

Yes, a plan can be changed at any time. This can be done verbally, by writing, by destroying the old plan or requesting that it be destroyed. It is important to inform your family, friends, GP or anyone else that you have discussed the plan with. It is also important to notify them of your new plan.

Advance Care Plan forms are available from:

- Territory Palliative Care
Phone: 8922 6761
www.nt.gov.au/health
(follow the A-Z link Palliative Care and click on Advance Care Planning)
- Top End Division of General Practice
www.tedgp.asn.au
- Central Australian Division of Primary Health Care
www.cadphc.org.au
- Respecting Patient Choices
www.respectingpatientchoices.org.au

This brochure was produced by the 'Respecting Patient Choices Project', Royal Darwin Hospital 2007, funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing.



Northern Territory Government

Advance care planning for Territorians

Let your choices be known



Northern Territory Government

What is Advance Care Planning?

Advance Care Planning enables people to discuss and decide upon treatments that they may or may not want carried out in the event that they become unable to make decisions or communicate their wishes due to illness and injury. This can also help family and friends make right decisions for their loved one.

Advance Care Planning in Australia cannot be used to request euthanasia.

When is an Advance Care Plan used?

The plan is used when you become unable to communicate your wishes or are unable to make decisions due to illness or injury. In these circumstances the plan would guide the people making decisions about your future treatment. It cannot be used to override your decisions while you are still able to express them.

How do I make an Advance Care Plan?

Plans can be made in one of the following ways:

- write down your wishes on the prescribed form of The Natural Death Act 1988
- complete the Statement of Choices form
- write a letter
- verbally discuss your end of life wishes with those important to you.

Whatever method you decide upon it is important that you talk to your family, friends and significant others about how you feel about these issues and what your wishes are.

The prescribed form of the Natural Death Act 1988.

The Act is part of Northern Territory statute law. The prescribed form of the Act is designed to document your wishes or directions in the event that you contract a terminal illness or injury and are unable to communicate your wishes. On completion, two people who are over the age of 18 must witness the form. The witness cannot be your treating doctor.

This document only takes effect when you have an illness or injury from which it is unlikely that you will get better and has left you unable to express your wishes or directions in a competent way.

The Act does not affect the provision of palliative care, which aims to relieve pain and suffering.

Statement of Choices and Medical Enduring Power of Attorney

This form enables you to appoint someone who will be able to make medical and health related decisions for you if you are unable to make them or express them yourself. These decision makers are called Medical Enduring Power of Attorney (MEPOA).

When selecting someone to act as your MEPOA it is important to choose someone who:

- you trust and knows you well
- is 18 years of age or over
- is willing to respect your views and values
- is able to make decisions under circumstances that may be difficult or stressful
- can be involved in discussions about the future treatment decisions that you want.

You have the opportunity to nominate up to three decision makers. You can also select a couple or two children to make decisions in partnership.

The **Statement of Choices** form enables you to outline health issues and wishes in a broader way than in purely medical terms.

You can complete both or one of these forms.