

What you should know about Advance Directives

Brought to you by Gold Kidney, everything you need to know about Advance Directives. Gold Kidney Health Plan is an HMO, HMO C-SNP, HMO-POS C-SNP with a Medicare contract.

Advance Directives overview:

What is an Advance Directive?

An Advance Directive is a document that outlines what healthcare and treatment decisions should be made if you are unable to communicate these wishes. It can also identify who you would want to be your voice for your decisions if you are not able to communicate these directly.

Why Do I Need an Advance Directive?

You cannot predict how, when or if you will become seriously ill or injured. It is important for you to be proactive and complete advance directives when there is time to think and discuss your choices with family, friends, associates and/or your healthcare team. Being prepared for the future is important when talking about finances, family and healthcare, no matter what the stage of life.

How do I fill out an Advance Directive? Do I need an attorney?

No, you do not need an attorney to complete your advance directives in Arizona. The forms are available for free on several websites and many resources exist to assist you should you have questions. You can speak with your healthcare team, social service case manager or a member of the clergy in your faith community about completing advance directive.

In Arizona, there are four types of documents that fall under Advance Directives:

1. Living Will

A living will is a document that outlines in writing your wishes regarding medical treatment in the event you are not able to communicate this directly with your healthcare providers. Your living will can also help guide your designated health care power of attorney (if you have elected one).

2. Health Care Power of Attorney

A Health Care Power of Attorney is someone who can make medical decisions if you are not able to make them for yourself. Your health plan power of attorney can discuss treatment options with your doctor and decide on the course of treatment. This document only goes into effect when your physician states that you are incapacitated, or you are unable to speak for yourself. Additionally, you can revoke or change your document at any time prior.

3. Mental Health Care Power of Attorney

A Mental Health Care Power of Attorney in Arizona will allow your chosen designation to make decisions for you regarding behavioral health placement and mental health treatment if you no longer have capacity to do so due to mental or physical illness. This can occur for reasons outside a mental illness, such as dementia, Alzheimer's disease or even a medication interaction. It is an important document to consider as part of your advance care planning.

4. Pre-hospital Medical Care Directive – Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)

A Pre-Hospital Medical Care Directive is a document signed by you and your licensed healthcare provider that informs emergency personnel not to use means to resuscitate you. Sometimes this is called a DNR – Do Not Resuscitate. If you have this form, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), hospital or other emergency personnel will not use equipment, drugs or devices to restart your heart or breathing, but they will not withhold other medical interventions that are necessary to provide comfort care or to alleviate pain.

Who should I choose for my agent/proxy?

It's very important to choose someone you trust (who is over the age of 18), and feel will be comfortable carrying out and communicating your wishes. Another factor to consider is how available this person will be to your healthcare team. It is crucial you have a conversation with the individual you are choosing, before finalizing the documents, so together you can discuss his/her role as your agent, along with your treatment and care choices.

You can access advance directives forms at no cost in several locations.

Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association (AzHHA) | azhha.org/tlc_forms

- Pre-hospital Medical Care Directive
- POLST
- Living Will (English & Spanish)
- AZ Health Care Power of Attorney with Optional Mental Health Authority Short Form (English & Spanish)

Arizona Attorney General Life Care Planning Packet | azag.gov/seniors/life-care-planning

- Pre-hospital Medical Care Directive
- POLST
- Living Will (English & Spanish)
- AZ Health Care Power of Attorney (English & Spanish)
- AZ Mental Care Power of Attorney (English & Spanish)
- Advance Directives Registry Registration

Having the Conversation

Many resources provide tools to start a conversation about advance care planning with loved ones and help guide your own decision-making.

- Thoughtful Life Conversations | azhha.org/tlc
- Arizona End of Life Care Partnership | azendoflifecare.org/resources
- Community Coalition for Advance Care Planning | seago.org/advance-care-planning
- The Conversation Project | theconversationproject.org
- PREPARE | prepareforyourcare.org
- Five Wishes | fivewishes.org
- SAGE – LGBT Elders Resources | sageusa.org
- The African American Spiritual and Ethical Guide to End-of-Life Care | amazon.com
- Go Wish Game | gowish.org
- Death Over Dinner | deathoverdinner.org
- The Conversation Project video | [Who Will Speak for You?](#)

Legal Resources

While you do not need an attorney to complete advance directives documents, it may be helpful in some situations to work with an attorney if there are more complex family dynamics and estate concerns.

- Step up to Justice | stepuptojustice.com
- Arizona State Bar | azbar.org

For more information, visit AZHDR.org.

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Enrollment in Gold Kidney Health Plan depends on contract renewal.