



CONCERNS AT THE END OF LIFE

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

Some "do's" and "don'ts"

“DO”

- \$ Prepare **now** - emotionally, spiritually and practically - for your end-of-life, no matter how far in the future that might be.
- \$ Remember that advance care planning is a process. It is an ongoing conversation. Wishes and preferences can change over time. Begin this important conversation now.
- \$ Reflect upon your personal values about quality of life. Consider your thoughts about life, suffering, death and medical interventions you would find reasonable.
- \$ Tell your loved ones your fears, your concerns, your hopes and your wishes so they can understand your thinking and be prepared to make the decision you would have made.
- \$ Be an informed patient. Ask your doctor(s) for the information you need about possible scenarios so that you can advise your health care surrogate or, when possible, meet with your doctor(s) with your health care surrogate present.
- \$ Consider completing an organ donation card.
- \$ Choose someone you feel can best speak for you, a substitute decision-maker, should that become necessary. Complete your health care surrogate form while you are in good health. Make sure it is placed in your medical records.
- \$ When acting as a surrogate decision-maker, consider the question, “*What decision would this person make for him or herself if he or she were able to do this?*”

“DON’T”

- \$ Allow fear of dying or a discomfort about the topic of death to interfere with discussions about end-of-life. Fear that is voiced loses much of its power. The discomfort will ease.
- \$ Hesitate to ask for decision-making support from all involved in your care - family members, the medical team, spiritual care givers.
- \$ Make unequivocal statements like, “*Never let them put a tube down my throat*” or “*Promise that you’ll never let me be sent to a nursing home.*” Such inflexible statements can place unnecessary burdens upon those who will try to act in your best interest. Each situation is unique and must be decided according to the specific situation, while always respectful of the persons wishes.
- \$ Delay completing the health care surrogate form.