



Summary of key points

Activity 4.1—

Make your choice

- You always have the right to make decisions about your medical treatment. But illness, disability, or injury could prevent you from making those decisions or communicating what you want to have happen.

Activity 4.2—

What do advance directives do?

- Advance directives are legal documents that express your preferences about future medical treatment and care.

Activity 4.3—

What are the advance directives in our state?

- Two types of advance directive documents are available and legal in Iowa: the durable power of attorney for health care and the living will or “The Declaration Relating to Use of Life-sustaining Procedures.” You, your agent, and your doctor all have responsibilities related to advance directives.
- The durable power of attorney for health care gives your agent authority to make your health care decisions. It takes effect whenever your doctor has determined that you are unable to make health decisions for yourself, even temporarily.
- The living will only conveys your wishes to your doctor regarding procedures that delay the dying process. It does not take effect unless your doctor determines that your condition will result in death without the life-sustaining procedures or when you are in an irreversible coma.

Activity 4.4—

Understanding advance directives

- Looking at the effect of advance directives in real life situations can help clarify your choices.

Activity 4.5—

Deciding to complete advance directives

- Deciding to complete the paperwork for advance directives is an individual decision that has ramifications for family and friends.