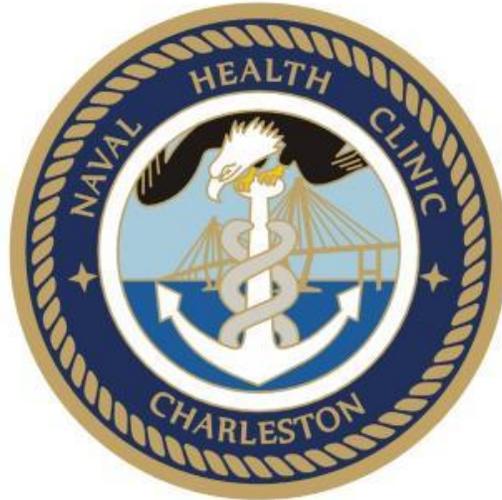


# Living Wills and Advance Medical Care Directives

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Living Wills and Advance Medical Care Directives are accepted by the Naval Health Clinic Charleston.

The following information is provided to help you in decision making.

## **What Are Advanced Medical Care Directives?**

Advance Medical Care Directives are directions that you make about your future medical care, in case you become unable to make decisions or are unable to tell them to your physician. The directives have NO effect as long as you are able to make your own decisions.

There are two types of directives:

**Treatment Directives:** These tell your physician the types of care you want or do not want under certain conditions. They usually involve cases of terminal illness/injury or cases of permanent unconsciousness. They are often called “Living Wills,” because they are instructions about your life.

**Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care :** This names a person, usually a family member as your agent. This agent can make medical decisions for you if you cannot make them yourself. A power of attorney can include specific directions or guidance to your agent. It is called “durable” because it will continue to be legally effective even if you become mentally incompetent.

It is possible to have one or both types of directives.

## **Who can make Advance Medical Care Directives?**

You must be a mentally competent adult to make an advance medical care directive. Mentally competent means that you are able to understand your medical condition and the care that is being recommended. Normally, only those who are 18 or older may make an advance medical care directive.

If you are not mentally competent, your physician will provide emergency care; other medical care will be given with the approval of your family or guardian.

## **Advance Medical Care Directives**

**are not required.**  
**This is an entirely personal decision.**

**What is South Carolina Law?**

South Carolina has a standard form of Living Wills. It is called a "Declaration of a Desire for a Natural Death." South Carolina law also has a standard form of durable power of attorney for health care.

A "Declaration of a Desire for a Natural Death" covers two conditions:

**Terminal Illness or Injury:** Death could result in a reasonably short time. A patient must receive treatment for at least six hours after being diagnosed as terminal.

**Permanent Unconsciousness:** A patient must normally be in this condition for at least ninety (90) days.

In these conditions, dying is not to be prolonged by life-sustaining medical procedures. Medication and care are still to be given for the patient's comfort.

The South Carolina standard form also allows you to make specific choices about receiving food and water by artificial methods, such as tubes.

You must be at least 18 years old to use this form.

The form is not valid during pregnancy.

Once signed, the form can be ended at any time you wish.

**How do I get and use an  
Advance Medical Care Directive?**

If you already made an Advance Medical Care Directive, you or your family will be asked to bring it to the clinic. A copy will be placed in your medical record.

If you have used a form other than that South Carolina form, or if you are pregnant, your Advance Medical Care Directive will be reviewed before being accepted.

If you do not have an Advance Medical Care Directive, you may obtain one without charge from the following:

**Joint Base Charleston Legal Office  
843-963-5502.**

**You may also contact a Civilian attorney or purchase a commercial legal form.**

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Patient Administration Department

It is possible to have both types of directives. Having a living will and a power of attorney for health care enables you to better handle potential gray-areas regarding your health care.

Naval Health Clinic Charleston operates under the following directives regarding Advance Medical Care Directives and Living Wills:

NAVMEDCENPTSVC INSTRUCTION 6410.4  
BUMEDINST 6320.2

A copy for review can be made available upon request.