

What is the difference between a living will and a DNR?

A living will and a "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) order are not the same thing. You may direct your physician to sign a DNR order if you do not wish to be resuscitated if your heart or breathing stops while you are in the hospital or a long-term care facility.

Resuscitation is a medical intervention that utilizes mechanical or artificial means to sustain, restore or supplant a spontaneous vital function. It may include, but is not limited to, chest compression, defibrillation or emergency drugs intended to sustain life.

If you are an adult with a terminal condition outside the hospital, you may also direct your physician to sign an "Out-of-Hospital Do Not Resuscitate" (OOH DNR) order. An OOH DNR would not apply if you needed emergency medical care due to a sudden accident or injury resulting from a motor vehicle collision, fire, etc. outside the scope of your terminal condition.

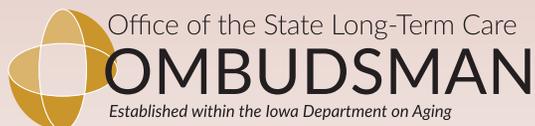
An OOH DNR order can be revoked at any time and in any manner, without regard to your mental or physical condition.

Your State and Local Long-Term Care Ombudsmen can be reached at:

866.236.1430

A Living Will declaration form is available from the Iowa State Bar Association (www.iowabar.org).

CONSIDERING A Living Will



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What is a living will?

A living will is a written declaration informing medical personnel whether certain life-sustaining procedures should be withheld or withdrawn if (1) you are in a terminal condition; and (2) you are unable to decide for yourself.

A terminal condition is defined as one that is incurable or irreversible and that, without the administration of life-sustaining procedures, will result in death or a comatose state from which there can be no recovery. The conclusion that a patient is in a terminal condition is made by an attending physician, confirmed by a second physician and noted in the medical record.

You (**the declarant**) may execute a living will declaration as a stand-alone document or you may include a living will within a health care power of attorney document. A living will can be revoked at any time and in any way by communicating the revocation to anyone who was aware that the living will existed.

What is a life-sustaining procedure?

A life-sustaining procedure is any medical procedure, treatment or intervention that (1) uses mechanical or artificial means to sustain, restore or supplant a spontaneous vital function, and (2) serves only to prolong the dying process.

The following are not considered life-sustaining procedures:

- The provision of nutrition or hydration, unless it must be administered parenterally or through intubation
- Dialysis
- Blood transfusions
- The administration of medication or provision of any medical procedure deemed necessary to provide palliative care or to alleviate pain

What if I do not have a living will?

Under Iowa's family consent law, treatment decisions (including the withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment) may be made by the persons listed below if (1) you have not executed a living will; (2) you are in a terminal condition; and (3) you are unable to decide for yourself:

- Attorney-in-fact (under a health care power of attorney)
- Guardian
- Spouse
- Child (if more than one, by a majority of those available)
- Parent(s)
- Adult sibling (if more than one, by a majority of those available)

Having a living will in place can help ensure your wishes are honored and avoid the possibility of having family members disagree about medical treatment decisions on your behalf.

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