



**Yukon Public  
Legal Education  
Association**

## **Advance Directive Information Sheet**

### **Your health care decisions**

An Advance Directive makes it possible for you to name the person you want to make your health care and some personal care decisions when you cannot do this yourself. This includes decisions about life support and other medical interventions. This can also include decisions about admission to a care facility such as a nursing home or personal assistance services like home care or personal care in a care facility.

Talk to your family doctor, home care nurse, health centre nurse or a member of your health care team for more information on Advance Directives.

### **What is an Advance Directive?**

An Advance Directive names the person you want to make health care decisions for you if you cannot do this yourself. The person you name to make these decisions is called your proxy. You can name more than one proxy, as well as an alternate to act if your proxy is unable or unavailable to act. You can also set out your wishes for your future care in your directive, but this is optional.

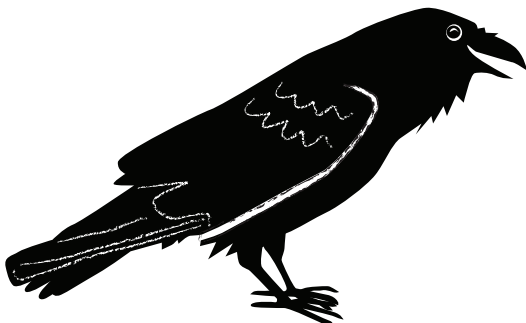
Preparing  
an Advance  
Directive can  
give you and  
your family  
members peace  
of mind.

### **Why is it a good idea to have one?**

You should have an Advance Directive to make sure that someone you trust will make your health care decisions if you cannot make these decisions. When you complete an Advance Directive, you decide who will make your health care decisions. You can write down your beliefs, values and wishes and your proxy named in your Advance Directive makes decisions based on your wishes.

Planning also helps your family at a time when they are likely to be stressed by your situation and reduces the likelihood of family disputes about the care you should receive.

Keep a list of anyone who has a copy of your Advance Directive so that if you want to make changes or revoke it, you can advise them.



## **What if I do not have an Advance Directive – who makes my health care decisions?**

If you do not have an Advance Directive, your next of kin will be asked to make health care decisions for you. This may not be the person you would have chosen for this responsibility.

## **Who should I appoint to make my health care decisions?**

The person (proxy) whom you appoint to make these decisions should be someone who understands your wishes, values and beliefs. You should always talk to this person before you complete your Advance Directive to make sure that your wishes are clear. Your proxy decision-maker can be someone in your family, a friend or someone else (such as a lawyer) who has agreed to take on this responsibility. They must be at least 19 years old, unless they are your spouse or parent.

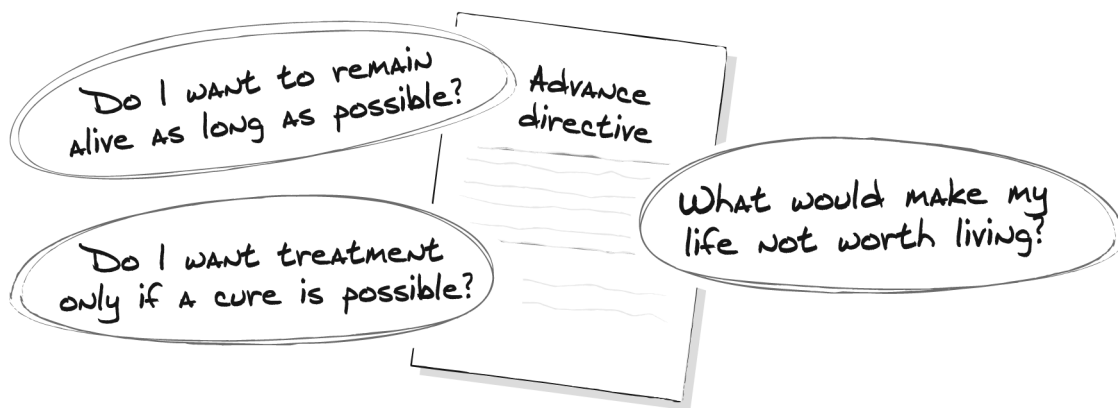
The person you name in your Advance Directive does not make financial or legal decisions on your behalf. To do this, you need an *Enduring Power of Attorney*. YPLEA has a booklet that can help you with this.



## How do I complete an Advance Directive?

**Step 1:** Get a copy of the Advance Directive information and forms from the Yukon Department of Health & Social Services. You can download this from the department's web site at [www.hss.gov.yk.ca](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca) or you can call the Palliative Care program at 867-456-6807 or toll free (in Yukon): 1-800-661-0408 ext. 6807 and ask for a copy to be sent to you. Read this information carefully. You may want to talk with your doctor, home care nurse, health centre nurse or other health professionals involved in your care.

**Step 2:** Decide who you want to be your proxy or proxies. Talk about your wishes, beliefs and values with your family and trusted friends and the person(s) you have asked to be your proxy. This helps them understand what you want when you cannot make your own health care decisions. Decide whether you want to write down your wishes in an Advance Directive. Wishes can be verbal, written or recorded.



**Step 3:** Decide what health care treatments you want and do not want. Do you want to be put on to a ventilator (breathing machine) if you cannot breathe on your own, for example? Do you want other life support interventions such as feeding tubes? Discuss this with your doctor, home care nurse or health centre nurse or other health care professional involved in your care.

Fill in the form and sign it. Two people age 19 or older must witness your signature. Your proxy must sign the form as well.

**Step 4:** Keep the original Advance Directive at home and tell people, especially your proxy, where it is. Give a copy of the directive to your proxy, family doctor and others who provide care to you. You may also give a copy to trusted family members and friends.

Notify Yukon Health Care Insurance in writing that you have a directive. There is a card for this on line at [www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/adv\\_directive\\_card.pdf](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/pdf/adv_directive_card.pdf) or by picking up a copy at their office, 4th Floor, 204 Lambert St. This is a record to say that you have an Advance Directive so that health care providers are aware of it.

If you are admitted to a hospital or nursing home, take a copy with you.

## What if I change my mind after signing an Advance Directive?

You can revoke or change your Advance Directive. It is easiest to make a new one and destroy all copies of the old one. If you don't want to change your proxy, you can keep your existing Advance Directive and just change your wishes as you have stated them. Date and sign the paper that outlines these changes.

Tell your proxy that you are doing this and revise any written or video or audio-taped instructions.

Your proxy must honour your most recent wishes made while you are still mentally capable. For example, if you tell your proxy that you have changed your wishes, those instructions override previous wishes, even if they were written in your Advance Directive.

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For more detailed information on Advance Directives see Yukon Government Health & Social Services website at [www.hss.gov.yk.ca](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca)

For general information on advance care planning go to [www.advancecareplanning.ca](http://www.advancecareplanning.ca)

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Yukon Public Legal Education Association can answer many of your legal questions. We also have detailed information about wills and estates, and *Enduring Power of Attorney*.

Our website: [www.yplea.com](http://www.yplea.com).

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or toll free within Yukon at 1-866-667-4305).

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