



## LAKE CITY Community Hospital

"Bringing Good Health To Our Community"

### MAKE YOUR WISHES KNOWN

#### YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT YOUR HEALTHCARE

You have the right to make all decisions about the healthcare you receive. If you do not want certain treatments, you have the right to tell your doctor, either orally or in writing. Most patients can express their wishes to their doctor, but some who are badly injured or unconscious cannot. People need to know your wishes in case you become unable to make decisions for yourself. The best way to be sure your wishes are followed is to sign a healthcare power of attorney and a living will.

The decision to sign a healthcare power of attorney or living will is very important. This pamphlet answers some frequently asked questions about healthcare powers of attorney and living wills, and provides you with a brief summary of our hospital's policy regarding such.

These documents will not be effective unless you become incompetent. In other words, your living will or healthcare power of attorney will not affect the healthcare you receive while you are able to make decisions for yourself.

If you have any questions about signing a healthcare power of attorney or living will, you should discuss this with your doctor, minister, priest, rabbi, or other religious counselor, or your attorney. Finally, it is very important that you discuss your feelings about life support with family members.

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#### LAKE CITY COMMUNITY HOSPITAL POLICY

Lake City Community Hospital has an advance directive policy, the purpose of which is to inform patients of their rights to make their own healthcare decisions concerning treatment or withholding of treatment if their condition is terminal or if they become permanently unconscious, and to insure the hospital's obligation to carry out their wishes.

The policy is also designed to assist all patients in gathering information to assist them, once they are at home in formulating an advanced directive if they so desire. Lake City Community Hospital is also required to have a representative from the Governor's Office Division (803) 737-7500 on aging present should a patient desire to execute a living will while hospitalized.

Lake City Community Hospital patient advocate will be happy to assist with formulating Living Wills and/or Healthcare Power of Attorneys on an outpatient basis. If you are interested please call (843) 374-2036 and ask to speak with the Patient Advocate.

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#### FACTS ABOUT HEALTHCARE POWERS OF ATTORNEY

##### *What is a healthcare power of attorney, and how is it different from a normal power of attorney?*

A healthcare power of attorney is a document in which you give another person (your "agent") the power to make decisions related to your healthcare.

A normal power of attorney gives your agent the power to make decisions about your money, property or business transactions. A normal power of attorney, however, will not necessarily allow your agent to make healthcare decisions for you. If you want an agent to be able to make healthcare decisions for you, you should sign a healthcare power of attorney no matter what other documents you have. If you want an agent to make decisions about money, property, or business transaction you will need a different power of attorney.

##### *Whom should I appoint as my agent? What if my agent cannot serve?*

You should appoint a person you trust and who knows how you feel about healthcare. You should also name an alternative in case your agent is unwilling or unable to serve. You should talk to the persons you choose as your agent and alternate to be sure they are willing to serve and they know how you feel about healthcare.

##### *Why should I sign a healthcare power of attorney?*

You may become unable to make healthcare decisions for yourself. You can name the person who will make these decisions for you by signing a healthcare power of attorney. Through this agent, you can continue to control your own healthcare. Without such a document, the courts may be called upon to make the decisions or to appoint another person to make them.

##### *What can I authorize an agent to do for me in a healthcare power of attorney?*

You can authorize an agent to make healthcare decisions for you in case you become unable to make decisions for yourself.

In your healthcare power of attorney, you may tell your agent what you do or do not want. For example, you may tell your agent that you do or do not want a blood transfusion or life support.

##### *What are the requirements for signing a healthcare power of attorney?*

At least two persons must sign the document as witnesses when you sign it. You do not have a to record your healthcare power of attorney for it to be valid.

##### *What if I change my mind?*

You can revoke your healthcare power of attorney at any time while you are competent by informing your agent or doctor that you have changed your mind.

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#### FACT ABOUT LIVING WILLS

##### *What is a living will, and how is it different from an ordinary will?*

A living will is a document stating that you want to be allowed to die a natural death and not be kept alive by medical treatment, heroic measures, or artificial means that will not improve your health. Your will is a separate document that tells your survivors what to do with your property after your death.