



## Advance Directive

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PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center follows Washington State law regarding Advance Directives and honors the right of any competent adult to have an Advance Directive that declares how medical treatment decisions should be made if, at a future time, they become unable to speak for themselves. Inability to make their own treatment decisions may be due to a temporary or permanent condition, such as serious trauma or disease, acute mental illness, or any other circumstance that prevents a patient from fully understanding the medical situation and available treatment options at the time decisions must be made.

Completion of an Advance Directive is wholly voluntary on the patient's part and is never required as a condition of care.

Each patient is asked if they have completed an Advance Directive. It is best to have an Advance Directive that specifically meets Washington State requirements; however, even an out-of-state document can help to clarify the patient's values and general approach to treatment decisions. The status of the patient's Advance Directive is documented in the electronic medical record (EMR). Written information about Advance Directives is offered to all patients who do not have an Advance Directive. Patients may rescind an Advance Directive at any time, either verbally or in writing.

St. Joseph Medical Center honors a patient's valid Advance Directive unless it conflicts with hospital policy, law or the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care. If it is known that any aspect of a patient's Advance Directive cannot be honored at PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center, the patient is so informed. It is the responsibility of any PeaceHealth employee to report concerns if it appears that care decisions conflict with the patient's known directive.

If a surrogate is making decisions on the patient's behalf, s/he must be able to prove they are the legal health care agent who can speak on behalf of the patient, and that s/he understands all directions and instructions on the WA State Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care form.

If the patient has been diagnosed as pregnant, the directive shall have no immediate force and effect during the course of pregnancy without review by the physician, patient, family, and, if indicated, the courts.

Washington State does not require that the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (DPOA-H) or the Health Care Directive (Living Will) be notarized, however, the Health Care Directive (Living Will) does require a witness. Hospital employees may not serve as witness to a patient's living will.