

SUMMARY

1. **Read** this Advance Care Planning Guide and the other documents in the information pack.
2. **Read** the Advance Care Directive form and the Instructions for completing the Advance Care Directive for adults form. This will help you understand what information will be needed to complete the directive.
3. Spend some time **thinking** about your **values and preferences** in regards to your current and future health.
4. **Think** about if you would like someone to **support you** to make **medical decisions** whilst you are still able to.
5. **Think** about who you would like to **make medical decisions** for you if you were not able to speak for yourself.
6. **Chat** with those close to you to make sure they understand the things that are important to you if you become unwell. Chat with your Medical Treatment Decision Maker, Support Person, family/friends/carers, and your doctor/GP.
7. **Appoint** your Medical Treatment Decision Maker.
8. Make a time with your healthcare team/doctor/GP to **write down** your values and preferences on the Advance Care Directive form. They can discuss benefits and risks of medical treatments with you.
9. **Share** your Advance Care Directive with anyone you want. This can include St Vincent's, your GP, your Medical Treatment Decision Maker and your family/friends/carers. You can also upload a copy of your Advance Care Directive to My Health Record (www.myhealth.record.gov.au)

NEED HELP?

Contact the Advance Care Planning Program Manager at St Vincent's:

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Advance Care Planning

For Patients

WHAT IS ADVANCE CARE PLANNING?

Advance Care Planning is a process of planning for your future health. This ensures those close to you and your healthcare team know what is important to you. It also lets them know how you want to be treated if you become unable to make decisions yourself.

Making decisions for someone else can be difficult and distressing. Advance Care Planning can help people close to you and those caring for you know what is important to you. It lets you be part of your future health decision making while you are still able.

Talking about and writing down your preferences for future health care will help those caring for you feel more comfortable about the decisions they may have to make on your behalf.

The Victorian law on Advance Care Planning changed on 12th March 2018. The new law provides a framework and more support for Advance Care Planning. If you made an Advance Care Plan prior to 12th March 2018, this will be considered by your Medical Treatment Decision Maker as a statement of your values and preferences.

WHY IS ADVANCE CARE PLANNING IMPORTANT?

There are 3 main benefits of Advance Care Planning. It:

- reduces stress for those close to you **who will make medical decisions on your behalf**
- clarifies treatments and **identifies your legal decision maker**
- gives **you peace of mind**

If you became very sick and could not make decisions for yourself:

- Who would you want to make medical decisions for you?
- Do they know what you want?
- What would be important to you?

Advance Care Planning can reduce the stress of decision making during a crisis. It can also provide a clearer understanding of your preferences.

Above all, Advance Care Planning allows your voice to be heard when you are unable to speak.

*Inspired by
You*

PATIENT STORY

On Grand Final Day, Val would have loved to have been watching the Hawks take on the Eagles, even if her beloved Bombers did not make the finals. Instead, Val was sitting in the St Vincent's Emergency Department. Val knows the ED well, having completed her nursing training at St Vincent's many years ago and subsequently being an in-charge nurse of the ED in the 1970's.

As the siren sounded to begin the final quarter of the Grand Final, the ED doctor approached Val. 'Sorry Val, I have some bad news for you.' With those words, Val knew her life would be changed forever.

Val was diagnosed with terminal cancer and admitted to the ward for further treatment. Over the next few days, Val lay in bed, contemplating her next steps. Over the next few months Val underwent many rounds of chemotherapy. During one visit Val met Sue, a Social Worker, who introduced the topic of Advance Care Planning.

Val knew what mattered to her and what her wishes were. 'My nursing experience, family values and my mother's death helped shape my views and wishes,' Val says. 'I don't want to prolong life without quality of life – I want to keep my dignity.'

Val revised her Will, Power of Attorney (Financial), and Medical Treatment Decision Maker. Val had never married or had children. However, choosing a trusted and knowledgeable friend to be her Medical Treatment Decision Maker was an easy choice for Val to make. This person will make medical treatment decisions on behalf of Val when she is no longer able to make decisions herself.

'Dignity and respect are important to me and having my Medical Treatment Decision Maker and Advance Care Directive in place has given me peace of mind,' Val says.

HOW DOES ADVANCE CARE PLANNING WORK?

ADVANCE

A Appoint a Medical Treatment Decision Maker and/or Support Person

What is a Medical Treatment Decision Maker?

A Medical Treatment Decision Maker is a person who you choose to make medical decisions for you. They only make decisions for you if you are not able to. For example, when you are seriously unwell.

You can legally appoint a Medical Treatment Decision Maker. You do this by using an Appointment of Medical Treatment Decision Maker form. You can appoint more than one person, but only one person acts at any time.

Prior to 12th March 2018, you may have completed an Enduring Power of Attorney (Medical Treatment), an Enduring Power of Attorney with power to make decisions about personal matters; or an Enduring Power of Guardianship. The person appointed in these documents will now be your Medical Treatment Decision Maker.

Why do you need one?

- It gives you control over who will make your healthcare decisions for you.
- Life can be unpredictable.

Who should I appoint as my Medical Treatment Decision Maker?

It is important to choose someone who has a clear understanding of your values and preferences. They must be over 18 years of age. It is a good idea to choose someone you trust and is available if required. They should also be a strong advocate to ensure your preferences are adhered to if and when required.

What is a Support Person?

You can also appoint a Support Person. An appointed Support Person can help you to make your own medical treatment decisions whilst you are still able to. A Support Person may help you by collecting and gathering medical information. They may also be a contact person for your healthcare team or speak on your behalf if needed. They cannot make decisions on your behalf. Instead they support you to make your own decisions.

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C Chat and Communicate

Think about your values and preferences, and what living well means to you. Talk with your doctor, your healthcare team and your Medical Treatment Decision Maker about what is important to you. It's a good idea to talk with those close to you such as your family/carer/friends/Support Person as well. You may talk about your preferences, values and attitudes towards treatment options. You could also talk about personal and cultural issues that are important to you.

PLANNING

P Put it on Paper

If there is something you feel strongly about, you can write it down in your Advance Care Directive. This makes sure your healthcare values and preferences are known. The directive will be used to guide your healthcare team and Medical Treatment Decision Maker if you are unable to make decisions for yourself.

An Advance Care Directive has two parts:

- Values Directive
- Instructional Directive

A **Values Directive** is a statement of your values and preferences for your medical treatment. Your Medical Treatment Decision Maker will use your Values Directive to guide them when they need to make a decision for you.

An **Instructional Directive** is a legally binding statement. You can consent or refuse future medical treatment. Your Instructional Directive takes effect as if you had consented to, or refused the treatment.

You can choose to complete either or both directives.

You should discuss and complete the Advance Care Directive with your doctor, your healthcare team and your Medical Treatment Decision Maker. You may also talk to your specialists and involve your family/carers/friends/Support Person. Your healthcare team can explain the details to you about medical treatments related to your condition. They can talk you through some of the benefits and risks of these treatments.

Interstate Advance Care Directives will default to a Values Directive. Interstate patients will need to complete an Instructional Directive to consent to, or refuse treatment.

NEXT STEPS

If you have any of the following documents, please let your health professional know and give them a copy:

- Advance Care Directive
- Appointment of Medical Treatment Decision Maker
- Enduring Power of Attorney (medical treatment/personal matters/guardianship)
- Advance Care Plan or Statement of Choices
- Refusal of Treatment Certificate