



# Advance Care Planning

## Step-by-step

### Purpose

Advance care planning is a series of choices you make in advance about your future healthcare. If you ever become unable to speak for yourself due to a serious injury or illness, your advance care plan will enable your healthcare team to pursue medical treatments that align with your preferences. It will also enable your loved ones to understand and advocate for your wishes.

### Your plan should:

1. provide instructions about your healthcare treatment preferences and goals in case of a life-threatening illness or injury,
2. identify whom you would like to make healthcare decisions for you when you cannot (this person is known as your *healthcare agent*).
3. document these choices on a healthcare directive form, and share with your healthcare agent, loved ones, and healthcare providers.

If, at any point, you are unable to speak for yourself, the plan you put into place will take effect. Your advance care plan will enable your agent and healthcare team to understand your healthcare goals, and to take steps to follow them.

### Consider your healthcare treatments preferences and goals

A life-threatening illness or injury can greatly impact your quality of life. Think about the quality of life that you would hope to maintain, and the types of medical care or comfort care that would be required to support it. Your healthcare team will help you or your healthcare agent understand your medical treatment options. You or your agent always have the right to accept or refuse any treatments offered that do not align with your wishes.

### Identify your healthcare agent

Your healthcare agent will be asked to make difficult healthcare decisions on your behalf. When choosing an agent, consider the individual's personality. Does this person think clearly, ask questions, and act decisively? Do they handle stress well? Will they advocate for your wishes even if they or others disagree with them? Are they willing and available to be your healthcare agent? If you answered 'yes' to all of these questions, the individual you have in mind would likely be a strong choice for your healthcare agent.

### Document your choices on a healthcare directive form

It is important to document your healthcare preferences and goals and appoint your healthcare agent on a healthcare directive form, and share it with your healthcare team, healthcare agent, and loved ones. Have a conversation about your preferences and goals to help clarify the reasons behind your choices. Give a copy of your completed form to your healthcare agent, healthcare team, and loved ones.

**When you are ready to get started with your advance care planning, Presbyterian Homes & Services has resources to help you with this important process. Scan the QR code with a smartphone to view the Presbyterian Homes & Services Advance Care Planning video, or contact your chaplain or social worker, who is a trained Advance Care Planning Guide.**

