

The benefits to establishing advanced healthcare directives

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Healthy adults may give little thought to injuries or illnesses. When the going is good, it is easy to forget about the less pleasant side effects of aging. However, putting off these conversations and decisions can lead to unnecessary obstacles in the years to come.

Advanced healthcare directives can be invaluable resources for family members and friends who will be responsible for managing a person’s plans should they become unable to make their own decisions. Various organizations, including AARP, offer resources on advanced planning and the options available to adults looking to plan their estates.

The National Healthcare Decisions Day movement, a group dedicated to providing clear, concise and consistent information on health care decision-making, defines advanced directives as establishing:

A “*healthcare power of attorney*” (or “proxy” or “agent” or “surrogate”), or the person you select to be your voice for your health care decisions if you cannot speak for yourself.

A “*living will*” to document which medical treatments you would or would not want at the end of life.

While these are decisions that people often put off, it’s important to make them as early as possible. Not only will they dictate your wishes, they’ll take the pressure off of loved ones who would otherwise be tasked with making difficult decisions on their own.

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