

Fairfield University Kanarek Center for Palliative Care

FAQs for Medical Aspects of Advanced Care Planning

Is a Living Will the same as DNR?

No. Living wills are legal documents which designate what your wishes were and who you would like to represent you should you be unable to speak for yourself. "DNR" or a Do Not Resuscitate is an actual physician's medical order which will be honored if the patient is wearing a corresponding identifying bracelet or carrying the actual signed document.

Does a DNR order cover other advance care plan issues such as artificial feeding, hydration and oxygen?

A DNR order is specific to cardiac compressions, intubation with mechanical ventilation and cardiac electrical defibrillation (shocks). A MOLST (Medical Orders of Life Sustaining Treatments) or POLST (Physician Orders of Life Sustaining Treatments) form can address other issues such as artificial hydration, artificial feeding, supplemental oxygen, and medications to prolong life such as IV anti-arrhythmics and vasopressor support medications.

Isn't Palliative Care the same as Hospice?

No. ALL Hospice Care is palliative in nature but NOT ALL Palliative Care is Hospice. Palliative Care simply addresses the relief of pain (physical, psychological, social, spiritual or practical struggles) without expectation for cure of its cause. Hospice Care is a type of Palliative Care specifically for those with a life expectancy of 6 months or less.

How Do I Know Who Would Benefit from Palliative Care?

If you been recently diagnosed with a serious or life-threatening illness and need assistance in understanding matters regarding goals of care options ie: living wills or advanced directives; long term care or hospice, a goals of care discussion may be of assistance.

If you are of advanced age with changing physical and emotional needs requiring home health aides or simply help with routine activities of life, a goals of care discussion may be of assistance. Take the quiz to find out if palliative care may be right for you: getpalliativecare.org/rightforyou/



If you are the caregiver of someone who is described above you may benefit from discussing their condition and their options for further care.

Resources: *Links to information and videos for further information:* Medline Plus: Health Topics



Center to Advance Palliative
Care
www.capc.org



The Schwartz Center for
Compassionate Healthcare
www.theschwartzcenter.org



National Hospice and Palliative
Care Organization
www.nhpco.org

