

## **Advance Directives (1999, Reviewed 2001)**

*Advance Directives* is an evidence-based practice protocol made available from the University of Iowa College of Nursing, Gerontological Nursing Interventions Research Center (GNIRC) Research Dissemination Core. The guideline is intended to assist members of the interdisciplinary team when facilitating informed decision-making by patients making choices about end-of-life care. The guideline contains a narrative section which explains the requirements of the Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA). It defines and simplifies specific legal terms relevant to advance directives. The guideline emphasizes that recognition of, and criteria for particular types of advance directives will vary from state to state. Therefore, the reader is referred to State Bar Associations for specific state statutes that pertain to the PSDA. Additionally, a quick reference guide to assist for selecting the appropriate advance directive choices is included. A consumer information sheet that contains helpful possible reference material is also included.

The guideline is organized into the following sections:

- Purpose-to encourage end-of-life health care decision making through education and discussion.
- Definition of Advance Directives and Supportive Terms – principal, proxy or agent, life-sustaining treatment, terminal illness, durable power of attorney for health care, and living will.
- Individuals Who Need to be Informed of Advance Directives – every adult patient, age 18 or older, given care from any institution receiving Medicare/Medicaid funds.
- Individuals at Risk (Barriers to Successful Implementation of the PSDA) – describes various reasons why only a minority of individuals have made an advance directive; lists specific groups at risk for not executing an advanced directive; and stresses the need to make information regarding advance directives in a variety of formats at an appropriate educational level.
- Assessment Criteria – describes process to assist health care personnel in facilitating informed decision-making by the patients making choices about end-of-life care.
- Description of the Practice – outlines actions to be taken by health care personnel in the event: (1) a Living Will has been completed and/or health care proxy has been designated; and (2) a Living Will and/or durable Power of Attorney has not been executed.
- Evaluation of Patient Outcomes and Process Factors – describes the processes for evaluating the usefulness of the guideline in improving outcomes and to assess understanding and support of each staff in carrying out this guideline.
- Appendices – the guideline includes the following appendices:
  - The 1991 Patient Self-Determination Act
  - American Nurses Association (ANA) Position on Nursing and the Patient Self-Determination Act
  - ANA Interpretive Statement – What’s an Advance Directive?
  - Legal Document from the Iowa State Bar Association
  - Advance Directive Inventory/Form/Patient Assessment Guide for Advance Directives: Living Will, and Durable Power of

- Attorney for Health Care
- Health Care Advance Directives: Resources
- Advance Directives Algorithm
- Advance Directives Outcomes Monitor
- Advance Directives Knowledge Assessment Test for Staff
- Staff Process Evaluation Monitor
- Reference List
- Contact Information

Copies of this 36 page guideline can be purchased from the University of Iowa College of Nursing website at <http://www.nursing.uiowa.edu/centers/gnirc>.