

The Post Rock Connection
Post Rock Extension District #1 Family and Consumer Sciences Column
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By Brenda Langdon, Family Resource Management Agent

Advance Healthcare Planning

At any age, illness or injury may cause a medical condition and the loss of a patient's ability to make decisions. Advance directives are legal documents that allow you to voice your wishes regarding future medical care and treatment in the event that you become unable to do so for yourself.

As competent adults, we all hold the right to make our own decisions if something were to happen to us. But, if something were to happen to you right now, and you could not speak for yourself, who are you going to give that right to? We also hold the legal right to make our own future decisions, and we can do that through advance health care planning.

If someone in your immediate family suffered a fatal medical crisis tomorrow, would you know what their wishes are regarding their health care? Do you know if they want their organs donated? Do they want to be cremated or buried? What about you? Do your family members know the answers to these questions about you?

A Durable Power of Attorney for health care is legal document in which you appoint someone to speak for you on your behalf. In Kansas, this person is called your "agent". They can decide what treatment you will receive in addition to where and who is treating you.

This individual, that you have appointed, can only speak for you if you were to become incapacitated due to illness or injury. If something happened to you right now and you were still able to verbally speak for yourself, your agent would have NO say over your medical care.

Your agent should be someone you trust, someone who knows you well, who will advocate for you and who will honor your wishes.

A living will is an instruction list to your physician, family, and friends about the preferences you have regarding life-sustaining or end-of-life care. A living will is different from a durable power of attorney in that it will become effective when you've been diagnosed as "terminal" by two physicians.

If you would like to become a registered organ donor in Kansas, you can easily do so by registering online at www.donatelifekansas.com/join. You can also request to be a donor the next time you renew your driver's license. You can also call 1-888-744-4531 to request a sign-up form to be mailed to you.

It is crucial to store the documents in accessible places. Always keep a copy in your house, a great place is to store it on your refrigerator. You should also keep a copy in your vehicle, such as in the glove box. It is also wise to give copies to family and close friends. Think about who would come to the hospital if something were to happen to you.

The Post Rock District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith Counties. Contact Brenda at bklangdon@ksu.edu or by calling 785-346-2521. Stay connected with "Post Rock Extension" on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Our website is www.postrock.ksu.edu.



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