

Michigan Dignified Death Act

Your doctor has diagnosed an illness which may shorten your life. Being sick is never easy. Learning that the illness may be terminal can create stress. It can be hard, both for you and for those close to you. This brochure is about your right to make choices about your medical treatments. This includes the right to accept or refuse any treatment that is offered to you. It also covers your right to have someone else make choices for you if you can no longer choose for yourself.

State law says that your doctor must give you certain information. Here is a summary.

Information About Other Medical Treatments and Their Risks

You have the right to be informed by your doctor about your treatment options.

- This includes the treatment your doctor recommends. Your doctor must tell you the reason for this recommendation.
- Your doctor must tell you about other forms of treatment. These must be treatments that are recognized for your illness. They must be within the standard practice of medicine.
- Your doctor must tell you about

the advantages of the treatment. They must also tell you about the disadvantages and risks. They must tell you the same things about the other treatments you have talked about.

- Your doctor must tell you about your right to limit treatment to comfort care.
- They must also tell you about hospice. Hospice cares for people who have a terminal illness. It also helps their families.

You should feel free to ask your doctor any questions you have about your illness. You should also ask questions you have about the treatments for your illness.

Possible Decisions

You, or those making decisions for you, can decide to:

- Begin treatment
- Refuse treatment or stop it once it has begun. This includes food and water.
- Be given enough medicine to control pain. You can decide this even if you could live longer with less pain medicine.

Choosing A Patient Advocate

You have the right to make decisions about your treatment as long as you are able. You also have the right to designate a patient advocate. This person will make treatment decisions for you if you can no longer choose for yourself.

The law does not require you to appoint a patient advocate. Your insurance company and health care providers can't make you appoint one. They may give you information about how to appoint one. If you appoint a patient advocate, it must be in writing.

Your advocate can make decisions for you, just as if you are making them yourself. Your advocate can decide about treatment for your illness. This includes getting, continuing and ending treatment. Your advocate may also choose treatment to manage your pain. Your advocate may also choose hospice care or other treatments to increase your comfort.

To appoint a patient advocate you should fill out a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare form. You can get these forms from doctors and hospitals. You can also ask an attorney to help you fill one out. On this form you may include a statement about the type of care you want. This will help your patient advocate know what type of care you desire. You may also pick an alternate person. They would be your advocate if your first choice is not available for some reason.

If you do not name an advocate, your doctor may let a patient surrogate make decisions for you. A court may also name a surrogate. A surrogate may be a member of your immediate family or your next of kin. If you have a legal guardian, they may also be your surrogate. If you are a minor, your parent or your legal guardian is your surrogate. More than one person might be considered your surrogate. The best way to know for sure who will make decisions for you is to name an advocate.

State law says that if you refuse treatment to extend your life or cure you, your insurance company cannot change what they charge you. This applies to both life and health insurance. They may not stop or limit your insurance benefits. They may not consider that you have cancelled your policy. Also, they may not prevent your beneficiaries from getting benefits.

It is important to remember that you do have choices of treatments. You also have the right to make decisions about those choices. You have been given this brochure because it is important for you to know about your right to make decisions.

*Michigan Department
of Community Health*



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