

# End-of-Life Glossary

1. **Advance directive**: describes two legal documents (living wills and medical powers of attorney) which allow a person to give instructions about future medical care should they be unable to make medical decisions due to serious illness or incapacity.



2. **Living will**: a type of advance directive in which a person records his or her wishes about medical treatment should he or she be at the end of life and unable to communicate.

3. **Medical Power of Attorney**: a document that names a person's representative in making their medical care decisions if they are unable to do so for themselves.

4. **Do-not-resuscitate (DNR) order**: a doctor's written order instructing a healthcare team not to attempt CPR when the heart or breathing stops; written at the request of the person or his or her family.



5. **Hospice**: care for a terminally ill patient in the last six months of life when the goal of care changes from cure to comfort; tailored to the patient's needs and wishes.

6. **Palliative care**: a way of treating serious illness that focuses on the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of the patient; goal is to achieve the best quality of life available to the patient by relieving suffering and controlling symptoms.

7. **Life-sustaining treatment**: also known as life-support; treatments that replace or support a vital bodily function; can include breathing tubes, feeding tubes, IV's, kidney dialysis, and other treatments.

8. **Withholding or withdrawing treatment**: to stop life-sustaining treatments or discontinuing them after they have been used for a certain period of time; generally done when treatments are no longer helping to improve a patient's health, or the treatment is causing other adverse symptoms.

