

Advance Directive Fact Sheet

Dear Patient,

This fact sheet is intended to provide you with some information on dealing with advance directive at the University Hospital Zurich.¹

No one is obligated to have an advance directive. In the event that you become unable to express your wishes or intentions due to an accident or illness, you have the right to specify the following in advance: You can specify what type of care and treatment you desire in a given circumstance or which measures should be dispensed with. You may also designate a person who shall make decisions regarding medical treatment in your stead and if necessary under what conditions if you yourself are not in a position to do so. An advance directive is thus also used if you are unable to make judgments on your own. If on the other hand you are able to make judgments, your current intentions shall apply.

You have drawn up an advance directive

Observing your intentions in each and every situation is of utmost concern to the physicians and nurses at the University Hospital of Zurich. It is therefore important for the treatment team to be aware of any advance directive that you have drawn up. If you have drawn up an advance directive, please bring a copy of it along to the hospital and give a copy of it to your attending physician. If you cannot do this yourself, please ask your family member or a trusted person to bring along a copy of your advance directive. The advance directive shall be stored in the electronic patient documentation.

During your hospital stay, you should speak to the attending physicians at the University Hospital of Zurich about the content of your advance directive. This will ensure that you have not changed your mind in the meantime and that the information in the advance directive reflects your current health situation.

If you are no longer able to make good judgments, our physicians and nurses shall be obligated to implement an existing advance directive in a specific treatment situation. An advance directive must therefore be followed unless your advance directive violates a legal provision or there are specific indications that you have changed your mind.

In an emergency situation, life-preserving measures must often be initiated which, as a rule, do not allow for ascertaining in advance whether an advance directive exists. If our physicians are informed of your advance directive after the fact, however, it shall be included in the treatment plan and the measures that were initiated shall be continued or discontinued according to the wishes stated in your advance directive.

¹ The fact sheet has been developed by the Clinical Ethics Committee of the University Hospital of Zurich, referring closely to the guidelines and recommendations of the "Advance Directive" of the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMW) of May 19, 2009. (Available on the Internet at <http://www.samw.ch/de/Ethik/Richtlinien/Aktuell-gueltige-Richtlinien.html>).



You would like to draw up an advanced directive

Anyone who is capable of making judgments can create an advance directive. This also applies for young people/adolescents who are capable of making judgments. The decision to draw up an advance directive must be based on free will, e.g. no one may be forced to draw up an advance directive.

An advance directive must be created in writing, dated and signed in one's own hand. It may be revised at any time or cancelled either in writing or verbally.

Mandatory content (necessary content):

- **Information as to the identify** of the enacting individual (name, first name, date of birth).
- **Confirmation of the ability to make judgments** ("In possession of my intellectual capabilities and in accordance with adequate reflection, I herewith decree the following for situations in which I am not capable of expressing my current intentions due to an illness or accident").
Note: In situations where the ability to make judgments could become doubtful at a later point in time (e.g. early dementia, psychiatric affliction), the ability to make judgments may be additionally confirmed by a physician / by a third party to avoid any uncertainties.
- **Information as to which situations the advance directive is being created for** or in which situations it shall be applied.
- **Information on the objectives** of a treatment in specific situations.
- **Consent to or rejection of specific medical procedures:** In the event of a known illness at the time the advance directive is being created, this illness should be mentioned and the advance directive should be geared to the illness and its likely progression, potential complications and medical procedures.
- **Date and signature.**

Target content (desired content):

- **Designation of at least one health care representative** and contact information on this person. Ideally, an alternate person shall also be mentioned.
Note: It is not mandatory to designate a health care representative, but it is wise to designate someone to serve as the first point of contact for your physicians and represent your intentions as expressed in the advance directive. You may also decide to only designate a health care representative, without providing any information regarding your intentions in the form of an advance directive itself. You should in this case discuss your views and wishes with this health care representative.
- **Description of personal values:** What does quality of life and "dying with dignity" specifically mean for the person enacting the advance directive? What personal convictions, fears, or expectations are to be heeded when making medical decisions in borderline situations?

Possible content (supplementary content):

- **Willingness to be an organ donor**
- **How to handle the body after death (autopsy)**

It is important for the advance directive to reflect your current wishes. We therefore recommend that you review your advance directive on a regular basis and update it by indicating the respective current date. If your personal conception of life, illness and dying or your health situation has changed, you should adapt your advance directive accordingly. The clearer your advance directive is, the more important it will be in the decision-making process.

There are organizations that can assist you in the creation of your advance directive. They will inform you as to the content-related and formal requirements of an advance directive in full detail. There are a multitude of instructions and samples of an advance directive on the Internet. You can find a good overview on the Internet site of the Stiftung Careum (Careum Foundation). Available on the Internet at: http://www.careum-explorer.ch/careum/Patientenverfuegungen_Informationen_und_Quellen.php.

Please note that an advance directive should normally not be drawn up under any time pressure. Obtaining advice from the University Hospital of Zurich may be advisable if, for example, the onset of your inability to make judgments is anticipated during your in-patient stay and you would like to create an advance directive.

If you wish to create an advance directive during your stay at the University Hospital of Zurich, you can contact your attending physician and/or one of the following offices at the University Hospital of Zurich:

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