

Advance Healthcare Directive Leaflet

Dear patient/employee

This leaflet explains how we deal with advance healthcare directives at the University Hospital Zurich.

Advance care directive

An advance care directive enables you to specify who should make decisions on your behalf and represent you in health, financial and legal matters if you no longer have the mental capacity to do so yourself. The Adult Protection Authority always verifies whether a person has lost mental capacity; only then does the advance care directive enter into force. The advance care directive must be drawn up by hand or certified by a notary.

Advance healthcare directive

As long as you have mental capacity, you **make all** decisions about your medical treatment yourself on the basis of your doctor's recommendations. An advance healthcare directive is only used if you no longer have mental capacity as a result of an accident or illness.

In such situations, you can answer the following questions in advance:

- What kind of medical treatment would you like?
- Which measures should be avoided?
- Who should decide on your medical treatment on your behalf as an authorized representative (Art. 378 Swiss Civil Code)?

If you have drawn up an advance healthcare directive, you will make important decisions easier for your family members and our medical teams. You can revoke your written directives at any time and change your treatment preferences. Nobody is obliged to have an advance healthcare directive.

Validity of advance healthcare directives

Any person with mental capacity can draw up an advance health care directive, including adolescents. All advance healthcare directives are legally valid if they have been drawn up voluntarily, if the person has mental capacity, if they relate to medical treatments, and are signed and dated by hand.

The directives you stipulate in advance only apply in a situation in which you are no longer able to make your own decisions. As soon as you regain mental capacity, we will discuss all pending treatment decisions with you again, regardless of what you have specified in your advance healthcare directive.

Dealing with advance healthcare directives at the University Hospital Zurich

All our specialists want to respect and implement your wishes in every situation. It is therefore important that the responsible treatment team understands your wishes and expectations. Please therefore submit your advance healthcare directive or an up-to-date copy of it to the doctor who is treating you. This is scanned into the electronic patient documentation. The original advance healthcare directive should always remain with you.

During your stay in hospital, we advise you to discuss the content of your advance healthcare directive with your attending doctor. This enables you to jointly ensure that the information in the advance healthcare directive actually corresponds to your current wishes.

If you no longer have mental capacity, our doctors and nursing staff are obliged to comply with your advance healthcare directive. You will be treated as you have specified, unless a therapy appears medically futile or if the stipulations violate statutory regulations. (For example, we may not use any medication with the aim of shortening lives.)

Emergency situation with sudden loss of mental capacity

In an emergency, it is particularly important to know your current wishes in order to be able to act accordingly. If

you have not stated your wishes or if your wishes are unknown, we generally take life-sustaining measures. If our medical staff subsequently learn about your advance healthcare directive, we will incorporate your wishes as quickly as possible and adjust the treatments already initiated. Your authorized representative must always be informed of any changes to your treatment; they must agree to or reject medical measures on your behalf.

Drawing up an advance healthcare directive

To ensure that an advance healthcare directive can be implemented and reflects your wishes in the best possible way, you should observe the following points:

Key content

- **Information about your identity** (surname, first name, date of birth, address)
- Appointment of an **authorized representative** (surname, first name, address, relationship), ideally at least one substitute person will be named. If you name more than one authorized representative, you should either rank the representatives according to who you most wish to act on your behalf or explicitly state that the persons named should decide together.
- **Confirmation of your mental capacity** Choose the appropriate wording: "In possession of my mental faculties and after careful consideration, I hereby decree the following"

We recommend that you have the directive signed by a doctor to avoid any uncertainty in the event that your mental capacity is questioned (e.g., in the case of the onset of dementia or mental illness).

- **Directives** for medical treatment in general and in particular in an emergency situation.
- Place, date and signature.

Desired content

- If you have already fallen ill, you should mention this in the advance healthcare directive and describe possible complications and measures.
- Describe your personal values and quality of life.
- Record personal beliefs, fears and expectations that are important for medical decisions.
- Specify the treatment goals you wish to achieve. Write down clearly and comprehensibly the medical measures you want and those you wish to reject.

Supplementary content:

- Your personal attitude towards organ donation, taking part in research and wishes about what happens with your body after death.

The more clearly your stipulations are formulated in an advance healthcare directive, the more likely it is that you will be treated according to your wishes.

Updating advance healthcare directives

It is important that the advance healthcare directive always reflects your current wishes. We therefore recommend that you review your advance healthcare directive regularly. If your personal circumstances, your attitudes and/or your health situation have changed, you should reconsider and adjust your directions if necessary. Always indicate amendments with the relevant date and your signature.

Advice on advance healthcare directives

Please note that an advance healthcare directive should not normally be drawn up under time pressure. Ideally, we recommend that you do not draw up an advance healthcare directive on your own but seek advice from a specialist.

Advance Care Planning (ACP)

The University Hospital Zurich also offers certified advice. ACP – “Joint Advance Planning of Medical Treatments” is an internationally developed concept for advance healthcare planning. You will be supported by trained counselors in drawing up an advance healthcare directive which best reflects your wishes and which is based on what is medically practicable.

If you would like to draw up an advance healthcare directive during your stay with us at the University Hospital Zurich, please contact your attending doctor or one of the following offices.

Direct registration

Advice center for advance
healthcare directives acp@usz.ch

For more information, please visit

www.usz.ch/advance-care-planning/