

## How to approach your Advance Directive:

A. Use a worksheet to help you think about your end of life wishes and options. Here are two options:

1. The Conversation Starter Kit: <http://theconversationproject.org/starter-kits/>
2. The Good End of Life: <http://www.goodendoflife.com/worksheets/>

B. When you are ready to fill out your Advance Directive, make sure you use one that is legal in Michigan. Michigan calls the Advance Directive a MICHIGAN PATIENT ADVOCATE DESIGNATION.

*The one legal form you will need in Michigan is the Health Care Agent assignment. Any of the following forms will include a portion about the Health Care Agent assignment. It needs to be signed by two witnesses, (not related to you, nor can it be your health care agent) and it does not need to be notarized.*

*Add to the legal form any other form that offers more information about your wishes, should you be in a critical health condition with little chance that you will recover the ability to know who you are or who you are with (you can use several different forms to make sure your wishes are clearly stated). And remember it is very important that you have a conversation with your family and friends about your wishes. The Conversation Starter Kit (see above #1) gives you a great tool to start that conversation.*

Here are a few possible forms you may use:

1. The Michigan Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is an **extensive document that clearly states the legal situation and answers many questions** regarding Patient Advocate Designations in Michigan. Power of Attorney, Living Will, Do-Not-Resuscitate Order, and Organ Donation forms are included at the end.

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/miseniors/Advance\\_Directives\\_230752\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/miseniors/Advance_Directives_230752_7.pdf)

2. Patient Advocate Designation for Michigan, published by Caring Info, the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization.

<http://www.caringinfo.org/files/public/ad/Michigan.pdf>

3. Five Wishes, an easy to use, quite comprehensive form for your end-of-life wishes.

<https://agingwithdignity.org/>

4. The compassion care protocol is a very short version of an advance directive. This might be a good document to give to your doctor. Use any other above to add more info for your health care agent.

<http://www.compassionprotocol.com/ContractForCompassionateCare.pdf>

5. Instead of a form, you may also write a letter stating your wishes. This is often called an ethical will.

6. A word about “Living Wills”: A “Living Will” states what decisions should be made at the end of your life. However, Michigan has no statute to give living wills legal force. A living will might be honored by doctors or hospitals but there is no assurance. That said a living can be an excellent guidance tool for your health care agent.

C. After you finish your Advance Directive, share it with your physician and your health care agent. In addition, you can upload the AD free of charge onto the Peace of Mind registry <https://www.mipeaceofmind.org/> (recommended by the State of Michigan government). At this time Michigan health care providers do not have electronic access to your advance directive. You may present your wallet card to a health care provider so they can request a copy of your advance directive.

Gabriele Mayer ([partnersinparting@gmail.com](mailto:partnersinparting@gmail.com))

