

AHCD Instructions

An Advance Health Care Directive (AHCD) is a document in which you (1) name an agent to make medical decisions on your behalf and/or (2) state your wishes for end-of-life care. The purpose is to ensure that your medical wishes are considered even if you are unable to express them.

To make an AHCD:

First, make sure that you trust the person that you will appoint as your agent and understand the document you are making. LAS recommends seeking the advice of an attorney if possible. You can contact your local bar association if you do not have an attorney. The Alameda County Bar Association's phone number is 510-302-2222.

Second, get an Advanced Health Care Directive Form. Your doctor may have a form that they prefer, or you can find one online. For example, the California Medical Association, California Association for Nursing Home Reform, Kaiser, and other organizations have forms and instructions on their websites.

Third, fill out the form. Standard AHCD forms include the following sections:

1. Part 1: Your Agent. This is where you can name the person who will make health care decisions for you if you are unable to do so yourself (of if you choose not to). You can also choose alternative agents, limit the powers of agents, and choose whether you want the agent's authority to take effect now or only after a doctor finds that you are incapacitated.
2. Part 2: Your Wishes. Here you can state your preferences about end-of-life care, including choices to prolong your life and be relieved from pain.
3. Part 3: Organ Donation. This section allows you to state whether you want to donate any of your organs, tissues, or body parts after you die.
4. Part 4: Primary Physician. Here you can enter the name and contact information of the primary physician (and an alternate primary physician) who you wish to oversee your medical care if possible.

Fourth, make your AHCD legal by signing it in front of either a notary public or two witnesses (you don't need a notary and witnesses). Witnesses must be at least 18-years-old and cannot be the person that you are appointing as your agent or your health care provider. If you live in a nursing facility, you will also need a signature from the Ombudsman.

Fifth, distribute copies of your AHCD so that your wishes are widely known. At a minimum, you will want to give copies to all medical facilities where you are likely to receive treatment and

your agents. It's also a good idea to carry a card in your wallet with your agents' information to contact in case you have a medical emergency.