



Advance Care Planning

Key Points

1. The Advance Directive (AD) is a valuable clinical and personal tool.
 - The AD allows the patient to plan future care, designate a proxy decision maker, and explore values and fears related to certain treatment options. It helps reduce uncertainty, decrease family conflicts, and achieve peace of mind.
2. Discussion of Advance Directives should be a routine part of care.
 - Physicians should discuss AD as routinely as any other health promotion or prevention issue. Barriers to successful use include physician discomfort and time constraints, poor timing of discussion and the confusing legal language of some documents.
3. Physicians should carefully plan discussion about Advance Directives.
 - The AD discussion should include designation of a surrogate decision maker as well as documentation of preferences regarding certain treatment options in the setting of an advanced illness. Physicians should encourage patients to discuss AD with family and caregivers, schedule a follow-up time to review the completed document and develop a plan for distribution to other appropriate individuals.
4. Physicians should periodically review Advance Directive with patient.
 - Indications for future review and modification of AD include a major change in patients health status and or/a change in the health status or availability of the designated surrogate
5. Advance Directives are not equivalent to DNAR orders.
 - AD may specify various degrees of aggressiveness of treatment