

Electronic Advance Directives

How to Share Decisions about Your Health Care

Shania's Story

Shania understands that illness can happen at any age. With the help of her doctor and family, Shania plans for future health care decisions by creating an electronic advance directive. Shania documents her preferences for the types of care she does or doesn't want to receive and names her health care agent, the person who will speak on her behalf if she can't speak for herself. An online advance care planning tool helps Shania securely create, update, and share her advance directive.



Reasons to Create an Electronic Advance Directive

An advance directive is only as good as the people who know about it, including providers involved in your care. While you may want to keep and share paper copies of your advance directive, creating an electronic version may be easier for providers to access when it's needed. Your provider and other online services offer advance care planning tools that can be accessed from a website or mobile app. Read on to learn more about options for creating, updating, and sharing your electronic advance directive.

How to Get Started



Many advance directives are attached to an **electronic health record**, a digital record of your health and treatment history (diagnoses, medications, allergies, etc.). You can give your health care provider a paper version of your advance directive to scan and upload to your digital record. You may be able to upload it yourself or provide the name and contact information of your health care agent using a patient portal, a secure website made available by your provider to access your health information and communicate with a care team.

Some **websites and mobile apps** offer online advance directive services that can be accessed using the internet and a computer, tablet, or smartphone. You can create an electronic advance directive by completing online forms that ask about your values, preferences for treatment, and desired outcomes. If you already have an advance directive, you might be able to upload a copy. Certain fees may apply. Be sure to check what safeguards are in place to protect your privacy. The terms of service and privacy policy should address how information is handled, stored, and shared.



MyDirectives is a free online service to create or upload your advance directive. All acute care hospitals in Maryland can view advance directives stored in the secure MyDirectives repository. The Maryland Health Care Commission recognizes MyDirectives for its use of national security standards to protect the privacy and confidentiality of its users. For more information, go to MyDirectives.com.

Remember – It’s never too soon to have advance care planning conversations. It can give both you and your loved ones peace of mind. And it’s okay if your preferences change – you can always update your advance directive. The following resources include more information to help you get started:

Advance Directives Information Sheet

mhcc.maryland.gov/mhcc/pages/hit/hit_advanceddirectives/documents/AD_Flyer_1C.pdf

Mental Health Advance Directives

health.maryland.gov/bha/Documents/Mental%20Health%20Advance%20Directives%20flyer.pdf

Office of the Maryland Attorney General

www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/HealthPolicy/AdvanceDirectives.aspx

