

# COMMON TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH ADVANCE CARE PLANNING



## ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

Advance care planning is making decisions about the care you would want to receive if you happen to become unable to speak for yourself. It includes the process of discussing values, priorities and the meaning and quality of one's life prior to needing to make end of life care decisions.

## ADVANCE DIRECTIVE

A written statement that gives directions for your medical care if you become unable or unwilling to speak for yourself. A new combined form, Advance Directive for Health Care, has been developed by the Vermont Ethics Network and is located in their Taking Steps booklet.

## COMFORT CARE

Care to keep you as comfortable and peaceful as possible, including pain medication, the provision of ice chips and lip ointment, turning to prevent bedsores, and bathing. "Comfort care only" means that disease fighting care is not desired.

## CPR (CARDIO-PULMONARY RESUSCITATION)

An emergency procedure that includes vigorous compressions of the chest, use of electrical stimulation, medications to support or restore the heart function, and rescue breaths (forcing air into the lungs).

## CURATIVE TREATMENTS

Any treatment that aims to heal the patient and allow for complete recovery from an illness. Treatments that will make the illness go away.

## DNR (DO NOT RESUSCITATE) ORDER

A written medical order that prevents the health care team from initiating Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). A DNR order can be incorporated into other more comprehensive medical orders such as the COLST (Clinician's Order for Life Sustaining Treatment)

## DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE

See the definition for Health Care Agent below.

## HEALTH CARE AGENT / PROXY

The person you name in your Advance Directive to make medical decisions for you, if that becomes necessary.

## HOSPICE

Hospice focuses on relieving symptoms and supporting patients with a life expectancy of months, not years. Hospice involves a team-oriented approach to expert medical care, pain management and emotional and spiritual support. In most cases hospice care is provided to a patient in his or her own home. It also can be in nursing homes and long-term care facilities, or at an in-patient hospice facility such as Vermont Respite House.

**START THE  
CONVERSATION**



## COMMON TERMS CONTINUED

### LIVING WILL

An older form of Advance Directive that states you don't want extraordinary measures used to prolong your life if you are terminally ill.

### TREATABLE

Medicines or methods of care that slow the progression of the illness.

### PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. It is focused on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness—whatever the diagnosis. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

### PROGNOSIS

A doctor's prediction of the course of a disease or illness.

### QUALITY OF LIFE

An individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment.

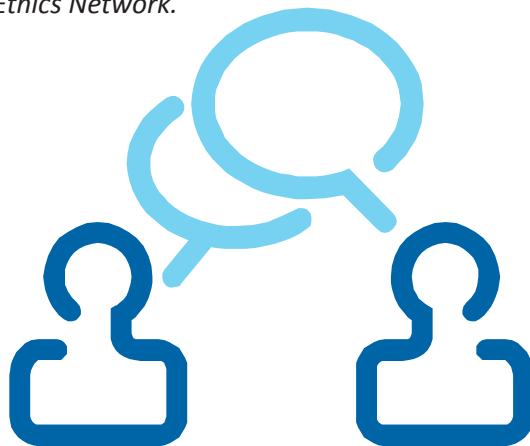
### VERMONT ADVANCE DIRECTIVE REGISTRY (VADR)

A secure database service that stores a scanned copy of your advance directive electronically so that it can be found immediately by any hospital or doctor who is treating you in an emergency.

### SOURCES:

Center to Advance Palliative Care  
GetPalliativecare.org  
National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization  
Vermont Ethics Network  
World Health Organization

*\*Additional terms can be found in Taking Steps, Planning for Critical Health Care Decisions, a publication of the Vermont Ethics Network.*



START THE CONVERSATION IS A PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVE OF THE  
VNAS OF VERMONT,  
YOUR NONPROFIT HOME HEALTH AND HOSPICE AGENCIES.

GET A CONVERSATION STARTER KIT AT  
[WWW.STARTTHECONVERSATIONVT.ORG](http://WWW.STARTTHECONVERSATIONVT.ORG)

