



## About Completing Your Living Will

You have decided to make a **living will**. Since this **advance directive** is a legal document, it is important that you understand exactly what you are signing. These instructions will help you do that. This form was developed by legal counsel for Saint Vincent Health Center to meet the requirements of Pennsylvania law regarding **advance directives**.

### Completing the *Living Will*

1. The first three paragraphs of the **Living Will** state that you are making your **advance directives** voluntarily. You understand that this document will be used to direct your care only if your condition becomes terminal (that is, when your life is ending) and you are unable to state your wishes. **Please read those statements and if you agree with them, print your name on the line provided.**
2. The next section lists several possible medical treatments. Check the boxes for what you do and don't want done for you. The following explanations may help you decide.
  - Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) is done to restore normal heart beat and breathing after one or the other (or both) have stopped. During CPR, oxygen is given to the patient by putting a mask over the patient's face and using a bag to get oxygen into the patient's lungs. Sometimes the patient is intubated, that is, a tube is inserted into the lungs and oxygen is given directly. When the heart has stopped and the person has no pulse, the chest area over the heart is compressed to try to restore heart rhythm and deliver blood throughout the body. Various medications may also be given during CPR.
  - Electrocardioversion is the use of electric shock, given by paddles placed on the patient's chest, to cause the heart to start beating in a normal rhythm again.
  - Mechanical respiration is the use of a machine to breathe for the patient.
  - Tube feeding is the use of a tube placed in the nose, mouth, stomach, or intestines to give nutrition and water to a patient not able to eat or drink normally.
  - Kidney dialysis is the use of a machine to take waste products out of the blood when a patient's kidneys no longer function.
  - Antibiotics are drugs used to fight infections.
  - Anatomical gift is the donation of a patient's whole body or certain organs for scientific study or transplant.
3. The *living will* needs to be **dated with the current day, month, and year**.
4. You are the "declarant" since you are declaring, or saying, what you want done. **Please sign and fill in the information that is asked for.**
5. In order for your *living will* to be valid, **you must have the form witnessed and signed by two people who are at least 18 years old**. If you complete the forms while you are a patient at Saint Vincent Health Center, and don't have available witnesses of your own (friends or family), the chaplain or a nursing supervisor may sign your *living will*. According to policy, they are the only associates of the hospital who can do so.

Copies of your *living will* should be given to your doctor, nursing home, other health care providers, your witnesses, and close family members.

Remember, your *living will* can be changed at any time. Each time you enter a health care facility you will be asked if you have **advance directives**. It's the law! If you have made any changes to your **advance directives**, please bring a copy of the new form with you. Be sure to tell anyone to whom you had given a copy.