



### Advance Care Planning

Advance Care Planning is the process of thinking and talking about future medical decisions if you had a sudden event, like a car accident or illness, and could not make your own decisions. The best time to make these decisions is when you can choose for yourself.

### Health Care Agent

A Health Care Agent is the person you choose to make medical decisions on your behalf if you are unable to make your own decisions. Discussing and sharing your wishes with your Health Care Agent is important.

### Advance Directive for Health Care

An Advance Directive is a written plan that names your Health Care Agent and allows you to provide instructions for health care treatments based upon your values and what is important to you.

*For more information about Advance Care Planning or for help creating an Advance Directive for Health Care, contact your health care team or Honoring Choices® Idaho.*

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Your individual health care goals, values, and preferences matter greatly if you experience severe or life-threatening illness from COVID-19. Complications from this virus could render you unable to make medical decisions for yourself. Due to your specific risk factors, you may have COVID-19-specific preferences you wish to convey. Your loved ones and health care team need to know who will make medical decisions for you and how you want to be cared for if you become critically ill. This guide is intended to help you address COVID-19 as a part of your advance care planning process.

### Make or Update Your Advance Directive for COVID-19

- Step 1.** Choose and ask a trusted adult to make medical decisions for you in the event that you become unable to communicate (this person is your health care agent).
- Step 2.** Consider potential options for treatment, care, and support if you were to contract COVID-19:

#### Hospitalization

Would you prefer to receive care in a hospital or at home? If you prefer to receive care in the hospital, do you wish to receive intensive care and CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) as attempts to prolong your life? If you prefer NOT to be hospitalized for your serious illness, supportive and comfort care may be provided in alternative locations (for example: homes, care facilities, assisted living centers or hospice houses).

#### Oxygen Support

If recommended by your health care team, would you accept oxygen support? Oxygen treatment involves inhaling oxygen through a tube in your nose or mask over your mouth.

#### Mechanical Ventilation

If you become critically ill, a specialized team will evaluate if a ventilator will be beneficial. A ventilator is a machine that pushes a mixture of air and oxygen in and out of your lungs to breathe for you. The machine connects to a tube that goes through your mouth and down your windpipe at the back of your throat. Inserting this tube down your windpipe is called intubation. When the tube is in place, you cannot talk or swallow. You will receive medicine to help stay calm while the tube is in place. Being on a ventilator requires care in the Intensive Care Unit at the hospital. Early studies suggest that individuals placed on a ventilator for COVID-19 will likely require lengthy mechanical ventilation, and the risk of death increases the longer individuals are on a ventilator. If the ventilator does not improve your condition or your condition worsens, you will be assessed to see whether the ventilator can still help you. It may be decided that the ventilator will no longer help you, so the breathing machine may be stopped. You will be kept comfortable during this process, and the focus of your care will be managing your symptoms and providing comfort. If you have concerns about ventilator use based on your current health, contact your health care provider.

**See other side for additional information.**

## Step 2 Continued

(additional options for treatment, care, and support if you were to contract COVID-19):

### Medications

Medications are used to provide sedation while on a ventilator or to provide symptom management. These symptoms may include: pain, shortness of breath, anxiety, nausea, and others. If you have concerns about specific medications used for treatment, talk with your health care provider and share with your health care agent.

### Palliative Care

Specialized medical care for people with serious illness. This type of care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms of a serious illness and can be accessed at the hospital. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

### Hospice Care

Hospice is not a place, but rather a philosophy of holistic end-of-life care and a program model for delivering comprehensive supportive care to people who are in the final stages of terminal illness, and to their loved ones, in the home or a home-like setting known as an in-patient hospice. It involves a team-oriented approach that is tailored to the specific physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs of the person and includes support to the family during the dying process. Hospice also provides bereavement support after death occurs.

**Step 3.** Reflect on the following questions to help your health care agent make treatment decisions that match your wishes and values:

- Is your main goal of medical care to maximize time and prolong your life, or to maximize quality of life and keep you comfortable?
- What makes life most worth living?
- What are your beliefs about when life would be no longer worth living?
- Are there any personal, cultural, or religious beliefs that may help guide your care?
- What brings you feelings of comfort/support?

**Step 4.** Share your care goals, treatment preferences, and wishes for serious illness and end-of-life situations with your health care agent and your health care provider. Ask your health care provider how your current medical condition may impact your likelihood of recovering from COVID-19.

**Step 5.** Complete an Advance Directive to appoint your health care agent. In it, clarify your goals of care, treatment preferences, and special concerns about COVID-19. Share a copy of your completed Advance Directive with your health care agent and your health care provider. For an Honoring Choices Idaho Advance Directive, visit: [www.honoringchoicesidaho.org](http://www.honoringchoicesidaho.org).

## Idaho POST (Physician Orders for Scope of Treatment)

A POST form is for people with serious, progressive or terminal illness. A POST is a medical order created by you with your health care provider to describe specific medical treatment decisions. A POST form is not a replacement for an Advance Directive and does not name a health care agent. Ask your health care provider for more information.

## Additional resources to help you make medical decisions concerning COVID-19:

[https://honoringchoicesidaho.org/covid19\\_resources/](https://honoringchoicesidaho.org/covid19_resources/)