

Facing End-of-Life Decisions

We at Missouri Right to Life are opposed to euthanasia, the act of killing someone rather than allowing the progression of natural death.

Therefore, we have provided some steps to ensure pro-life decisions are prioritized on behalf of you, even if you are not able to express your decisions at a time when you need them most.

Key Recommendations

- **Establish a Durable Power of Attorney (DPA) for Health Care:** Please see our website for our DPA documents that help appoint a trusted agent to make medical decisions on your behalf.
- **A Two-Stage Decision Process:** The appointed agent should follow a two-step process for making decisions:
 1. **Medical Assessment:** Understand the diagnosis, prognosis, proposed treatments, potential side effects and alternatives.
 2. **Moral Assessment:** Determine if the proposed treatment's benefits outweigh its burdens (such as substantial pain), while affirming that life itself is always good.

Critique of Checklist-Style Advance Directives

We strongly warn against using generic, checklist-style advance directives often found online due to these serious problems that you and your loved ones will face:

- **Impossibility of Informed Consent:** It is impossible to give "informed consent" in advance because you cannot know what future medical conditions or technological advances you may face.
- **Overly Broad Categories:** Checklists use vague categories like "antibiotics" or "surgery," which could lead to refusing a simple, life-saving treatment (e.g., for a flu or broken bone) that you would otherwise want.
- **People Change Their Minds:** Attitudes about end-of-life care often change over time, especially as a person ages and faces serious conditions.
- **Futility Misconception:** A treatment is not "futile" just because it doesn't offer a cure. Many treatments, like insulin for diabetes, provide long-term stability and a longer life even without a cure.
- **Uncertainty of Diagnosis:** Diagnoses of mental states like "persistent vegetative state" are often imprecise and can be scientifically wrong, potentially leading to the withdrawal of care from a conscious patient who simply cannot communicate.



Advance
Directives
Here

