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Ask-a-Provider: Trudy Noon on advance directives

Ask-a-Provider is an occasional feature that highlights timely questions-and-answers with Asante health care providers.



[Trudy Noon](#), a certified nurse practitioner who specializes in chronic and complex disease management, joined Asante Physician Partners-Family Medicine, in Grants Pass last year. Trudy earned her doctorate and master's degree in nursing from the University of Central Florida in Orlando, and her bachelor's degree in nursing from Regis University in Denver.

Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Q: I've been told I should fill out an advance directive. What does that mean, and why do I need one?

A: When people become sick or injured and are unable to speak for themselves, doctors have no way of knowing their true wishes. The best way to make sure your health care wishes are carried out is to write them down in a document called an advance directive. This is a legal document that you keep on file with your health care provider, which outlines your wishes if you ever become incapacitated and need end-of-life care.

Q: Are advance directives all the same?

A: There are several types of advance directives. The most important one is a durable power of attorney for health care, which appoints someone to make health care decisions for you if you are unable to express your own wishes. Talk with your relatives about how you'd want to be treated in the event of an incapacitating illness or tragedy, and make sure your appointed power of attorney is aware of his or her responsibility. It's best to choose someone you trust, and who respects your decisions.

Another type of document is called a "physician orders for life sustaining treatment," or POLST. It may also be called the "do not resuscitate" or DNR form. This document allows you to deny any life-saving medical treatment if you were to stop breathing or if your heart were to stop beating.

Some very ill or elderly patients complete a DNR if they wish to pass away naturally rather than prolong their lives through medical intervention.

Q: Isn't that the same thing as an advance directive?

A: The POLST does not replace your advance directive. It is best to fill out a POLST along with an advance directive and to keep both on file with your health care provider, attorney and family members or power of attorney. Keep a copy for yourself, as well. As long as you are able to make your own health care decisions, you may change your advance directives at any time.

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More information and downloadable forms are available on asante.org.

Trudy Noon is a certified nurse practitioner with Asante Physician Partners-Family Medicine, in Grants Pass. To schedule an appointment, call her office at (541) 507-2080.

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