

## Your Alabama Advance Directive

1. An Alabama Advance Directive can be completed by anyone who
  - a. Is at least 19 years old AND
  - b. Has decision-making ability
2. An Advance Directive can have two parts. The first part, a Living Will, your opportunity to write down your wishes concerning health matters, gives you a voice should you ever be unable to speak for yourself due to terminal illness (expectation of less than six months survival) or a permanent unconscious state. Part two, a Healthcare Proxy, is your opportunity to name someone to speak for you if you can no longer speak for yourself.
3. To make sure your voice is heard, you should discuss your healthcare wishes with your family, clergy, doctor, and any other significant people in your life. Your Advance Directive should be kept in a safe place inside the home. Do not keep your Advance Directive in a safe deposit box as it will be difficult for your loved ones to find it when they need it.
4. Your Advance Directive will be used when:
  - a. Your healthcare providers have a copy of it,
  - b. Your doctor has concluded that you are no longer able to make your own health care decisions and,
  - c. Your doctor and another doctor have determined that you are in a terminal condition or a permanent unconscious state.
5. If you sign an Advance Directive and later change your mind, you can tear up the original document, complete a new Advance Directive, and distribute copies.
6. If you need help understanding the kinds of medical decisions you can make in your Advance Directive, you should discuss them with your doctor.
7. In the Advance Directive enclosed, there is a section where you can name a health care proxy (someone who can make medical decisions for you if you are unable to make them for yourself).

If you name a health care proxy, there is a location for that person to sign this document. More than one proxy can be listed, but the first person listed will be the primary proxy.

8. Your Advance Directive needs to be signed and dated in the presence of two witnesses. Witnesses must not be related to you by blood, marriage or adoption; must not stand to gain financially by your death, and are not responsible for your medical care.