

If you're 60 or over, call your local legal aid office:

Eastern CT	800-413-7796	Western CT	800-413-7797
Hartford Area	860-541-5000	Bridgeport Area	800-809-4434
Stamford Area	800-541-8909	New Haven Area	203-946-4811

If you're under 60, call SLS for help:



Statewide Legal Services
1-800-453-3320
860-344-0380

Search our website for help:



www.ctlawhelp.org

HEALTH CARE

LEGAL SERVICES

SELF-HELP SERIES

Health Care Instructions Living Wills & Advance Directives

You can decide *now* about the care you want if you are unable to make decisions *later*.

July 2017



We offer free legal help in many areas, including

- welfare,
- SNAP (food stamps),
- divorce,
- child support,
- domestic violence,
- bankruptcy,
- special education,
- nursing home care,
- health insurance,
- eviction,
- foreclosure,
- and more.

See the reverse side for more about legal services.

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Statewide Legal Services
1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380

Search our website for help:



www.ctlawhelp.org

If you're over 60, call your local legal aid office.

Connecticut Legal Services

www.ctlegal.org

Bridgeport

1000 Lafayette Blvd 203-336-3851
Suite 950

New Britain

16 Main Street 860-225-8678

New London

125 Eugene O'Neill Dr.
Suite 120 860-447-0323

Stamford

20 Summer Street 203-348-9216

Waterbury

85 Central Avenue 203-756-8074

Willimantic

1125 Main Street 860-456-1761

Greater Hartford Legal Aid

www.ghla.org

999 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
860-541-5000

New Haven Legal Assistance Association

www.nhlegal.org

426 State Street
New Haven, CT 06510
203-946-4811

Consumer Law Project for Elders

Free legal assistance to people 60 and over throughout Connecticut who have money/debt problems.

1-800-296-1467

Health Care Instructions

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This booklet was produced by Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, and Statewide Legal Services of Connecticut.

The information in this booklet is based on laws in Connecticut as of 7/2017. We hope that the information is helpful. It is not intended as legal advice. For advice on your situation, call Statewide Legal Services or contact a lawyer.

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Changing Your Instructions

You can change any part of your health care instructions at any time.

- To change your living will, you only have to say, show, or write that you have changed your mind.
- You must change your health care representative or your organ donation wishes in writing and sign it in front of two witnesses. If you change your health care instructions, give a copy to your health care representative(s) and anyone else who might need it.

For More Information

Call Statewide Legal Services:

- 860-344-0380 (Central CT & Middletown)
- 1-800-453-3320 (all other areas)

Contact the State Department of Social Services Elder Services Division:

- 860-424-5244
- 1-800-443-9946 toll free
- www.ct.gov/agingservices

Learn more at these websites:

- Legal Services Elder Law: www.ctelderlaw.org
- State Attorney General: www.ct.gov/ag

You can decide *now* what types of care you want if you are unable to make those decisions *later*. Health Care Instructions tell your health care providers your wishes even if you become unable to speak for yourself because of dementia or other medical problems.

Your health care instructions include your directions about

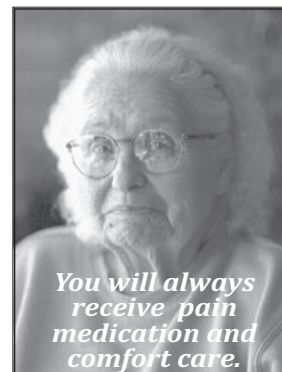
- living wills,
- health care representatives,
- conservators preference, and
- organ donation.

Living Wills

Your living will says what medical treatment you want *only* if you are terminally ill or in a permanent coma.

- *Terminally ill* means your medical problem can't be cured or reversed. Without treatment to keep you alive, your doctor expects you to die soon.
- *Permanent coma* means at least two doctors say you are unconscious and are not expected to wake up.

Living wills let you decide if you want



- CPR if you stop breathing,
- food or water through a tube,
- a breathing machine, or
- other treatment to keep you alive.

Do Not Resuscitate Orders (DNR)

A DNR is an order written by your doctor—in consultation with you—about withholding certain medical treatment.

Health Care Representatives

Your health care representative is the person you choose to make health care decisions for you if you can't speak for yourself. Choose someone you trust: someone who knows your wishes and is willing to follow them. That person should also be able to communicate your wishes about your care and your expected outcome to your health care providers. Name a second person who can be your representative in case the first person isn't available.

If you signed a living will, your representative will make sure your end-of-life decisions are followed. If you did not sign a living will and you cannot express your desires to your physician, then your representative will make end-of-life decisions for you.



If you cannot speak for yourself, your health care representative can make your health care decisions according to your living will.

Conservators

A conservator is someone who will make sure you are properly cared for if a judge finds that you are not able to make decisions about your care. A conservator can only be appointed by the Probate Court, but you can name the person you would want to be your conservator. You can name your health care representative as your conservator.

Organ Donation

You can decide if you want to donate any of your organs.

Preparing Your Health Care Instructions

No one—not your doctor, a nursing home, or a hospital—can make you write or share health care instructions, but they must ask if you have them. They cannot deny you care if you don't have health care instructions.

You don't need a lawyer help you, but it is a good idea. You will be making difficult decisions. A lawyer can help you make health care instructions that are right for you. You may also want to talk to your doctors, family, and friends.

To make your health care instructions legal, you must

- be at least 18 years old,
- be able to understand the impact of your health care decisions, and
- sign and date your health care instructions in front of two witnesses. Your health care representative cannot be a witness.

Give copies of your signed health care instructions to your

- family and health care representative, and
- doctors and others who might be taking care of you if you can't take care of yourself.

Also keep a note in your wallet that says where to find your health care instructions.