



Fact Sheet

The Gift Initiative is a non-profit community education collaborative in Tennessee led by Alive Hospice and partners who also see advance planning as a gift we give those we love.

Website: www.TheGiftInitiative.org **Phone:** 615-327-1085

The **gift logo** and name symbolize “the gift of conversation” ... having the talk with your loved ones about end-of-life care is among the greatest gifts we can give.

An **advance directive** is a document that reflects a person’s wishes for future medical care and designates a trusted person to make decisions on his or her behalf in the event of a debilitating illness or incapacity. It’s a way we can speak up for what we want, even if we’re unable to speak for ourselves.

To date, the team at **The Gift Initiative at Alive Hospice has given more than 100 presentations to more than 3,300 people** in the Middle Tennessee area about advance directives. These outreach programs provide attendees with skills to have the conversations with their loved ones, as well as education about the various forms, options and meanings of these health-care documents.

More than 75% of us will reach a point in our lives when we are unable to make and/or communicate decisions about our preferences for care.

The best time to fill out an advance directive form is when you are well. Adults of all ages should have these conversations with their loved ones and fill out advance directive forms.

Advance Care Plans vs. Living Wills: The State of Tennessee changed the form name from “Living Will” to “Advance Care Plan” in 2004. The new form has more detailed instructions and includes both the Appointment of Health Care Agent and Advance Directives. Existing Living Wills continue to be honored.

Advance directives do not require a lawyer or notary public. If it is not notarized, it will need to be witnessed by two competent adults, one of whom is not related to the person filling out the form, nor entitled to any part of that person’s estate.

Studies show that when family members are willing to talk with each other and medical providers about quality of life, care options and individual preferences, **patients are more likely to have a peaceful death and family members are less likely to suffer** from prolonged grief and depression. This is why it's a gift to yourself and your family members.

When asked, **most people say they hope to spend the end of their lives at home, free of pain and with the people they love.** Without advance planning, this is not likely to happen.