

PREPARING FOR LIFE'S "WHAT IF'S"

Routine check-ups are part of great health care. So are open and honest conversations about what is important to you. Plan ahead and choose a trusted, reliable person to help make health care choices for you. This person will make decisions for you if you have a sudden event or illness that prevents you from doing so.

TALK ABOUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT

Explain what is important to you, such as your goals, values, and preferences. Let us know how these shape the decisions you make about your health care.

CHOOSE SOMEONE WHO CAN SPEAK FOR YOU

Choose a trusted, reliable person to make sure that your health care wishes are known and honored. This person will speak for you if you are ever temporarily or permanently unable to make decisions for yourself. This person is called a "health care agent." A health care agent can be a family member, spouse, same-sex or domestic partner, an adult child, a friend, or someone you trust. Your health care agent must be willing to accept this role. They will talk to you about your goals, values, preferences, and respect your decisions. Moreover, your health care agent will make decisions for you in difficult moments if needed.

DOCUMENT YOUR WISHES AND SHARE YOUR PLAN

Complete a health care proxy form, which is an "advance directive," and share it with your health care agent, doctor, hospital, and those you care about. When you document your wishes, it becomes an important way to make sure they are honored. It is also a vital part of advance care planning.

The Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) form may be helpful if you have a serious health condition. The MOLST does not take the place of the "advanced directive." The MOLST helps you and your loved ones plan for health care decisions that may need to be made. This document may be needed in the event

that you are not able to speak due to your serious illness. The MOLST form is signed by a doctor as a medical order and is valid in any health care setting, and at home.

LET YOUR HEALTHCARE AGENT MAKE DECISIONS FOR YOU WHEN NEEDED

Your health care agent would only begin to make health care decisions after your doctor decides you cannot do so. As long as you are able, you will have the right to make your own health care decisions.

UPDATE YOUR PLAN AT ANY TIME

Advance care planning is an ongoing process, not a one-time event; you can update your advance care plan at any time.

We understand that you may feel uncomfortable talking about these difficult topics. Starting the conversation is an important first step, which can make things easier in the future. If you plan ahead (at any age or health status), this will ensure your health care wishes are known. It is an important gift to yourself and to your loved ones.

QUESTIONS

For more information and for help with completing a health care proxy form or MOLST, ask your health care team or call the Advance Care Planning Program at 212-263-0416. For NYU Langone Orthopedic Hospital, call the Social Work Department at 212-598-6030. For NYU Langone Hospital—Brooklyn call the Social Work Department at 718-630-7515. For NYU Langone Hospital—Long Island, call the Social Work Department at 516-663-2341.