

## NeuroCare Institute of Central Florida, P.A.

### Living Will and Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare Forms and Instructions

The **Designation of Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare and Living Will** are legal documents you may complete to help ensure that your wishes are carried out when you are unable to speak for yourself. **It is very important that your wishes expressed in these documents be discussed with your physician and family / significant other.**

You may at sometime lose the ability to make sound judgements concerning medical treatment for reasons that may range from confusion caused by medication to coma following a major accident. When you cannot make decisions about your medical care, others, such as family members and physicians will need to take responsibility for these decisions. Often, it is difficult for them to know what your wishes are. The decision process in these complex situations is made easier when you have previously expressed wishes about your medical care, including the withholding and/or withdrawal of life prolonging procedures.

You must be an adult (age 18 or older) and of sound mind when completing these forms. **In order for these documents to be valid, they must be signed by you in the presence of two witnesses. Only one witness may be your spouse or a relative.** The person you designate as your Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare **cannot** be a witness. These documents do not need to be notarized.

The **Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare** document allows you to appoint another person to make Healthcare decisions on your behalf when you are unable to do so. It is recommended that you appoint an adult who knows your wishes and will carry them out. It is suggested that you choose a person who has exhibited special care and concern for you and has maintained regular contact and is familiar with your personal, religious, moral and cultural beliefs. Your Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare will have the authority to make all medical decisions on your behalf according to your wishes, including but not limited to the withholding / withdrawal of life prolonging procedures.

The **Living Will** document lets your physician(s) and others know your choices regarding the use of life prolonging procedures if you are unable to make decisions for yourself. Your physician and your Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare are to follow the directives of the Living Will. Your physician is required to make a reasonable effort to transfer your care to another physician if he / she is unable or unwilling to carry out your wishes specified in the Living Will.

These documents are valid as long as you do not rescind them or declare them void. These documents will continue indefinitely unless you provide for an expiration date. These documents will become void at time of death. If you decide at any time to revoke any portion of these documents, **immediately tell** this to your attending/treating physician. Also, retrieve and destroy all copies given to others and complete a new document(s).

You should keep the original completed documents. Copies should be given to:

- individual designated as Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare
- family member(s), friends, as appropriate
- family physician or primary health care provider
- the hospital each time you are admitted
- nursing home or assisted living facility if this is your home
- clergy, and / or attorney (optional)

The Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare, Living Will and these instructions are based on Florida law. These instructions are intended to be general guidelines only. If further guidance is needed or questions arise regarding these documents, your physician, clergy, or attorney should be contacted.

Note: If you are a Florida Hospital inpatient, you may receive additional information by watching the hospital's educational TV channel at 11 am and 7 pm. If you would like assistance after reviewing the information, please ask your nurse to contact the Chaplain, Case Management, or a Patient Relations Representative.