

Personal Directives

When a person is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or another related dementia, it does not mean that they are immediately incapable of making decisions for themselves. However, due to the progressive nature of the disease, that ability will diminish with time. Therefore, it is important for a person to make his or her wishes about any future decisions known, as soon as possible.

It is helpful to think of Advance Directives also known as Personal Directives in the context of Advanced Care Planning.

Advanced Care Planning is a process for you to:

- Think about what is important to you when making choices about future healthcare
- Learn about medical information that is important to your health concerns
- Choose someone to speak on your behalf
- Tell your agent/representative and loved ones about your wishes and what is important to you
- Write down your wishes so that your family and healthcare providers know them.

A Personal Directive is a legal document you complete to name an agent to make decisions for you about any non-financial personal matters. The Personal Directive only goes into effect when the maker of the document lacks "capacity." Capacity is defined as your ability to understand the information you need to know when making personal decisions as well as the possible results (good or bad) of that decision. The document is a guide to help your healthcare providers and family make appropriate decisions for your care in alignment with your choices.

Making decisions and controlling one's own life are important for each of us. Therefore, it is a good idea to plan your care while you are healthy. Alberta Health notes that "All adult Albertans should consider making a personal directive in the future. Incapacity from industrial or motor vehicle accidents could happen at any time. The law in Alberta does not allow for another person to automatically make decisions for another." (www.seniors.gov.ab.ca).

Source: www/calgaryhealthregion.ca/carenlife



Alzheimer Society

CALGARY

