

A More Efficient Advanced Directive Form

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What is an Advance Directive?

- Living Will
 - Specifies health care wishes when one is ‘incapable of making an informed decision’
 - NOT a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) document
 - Generally includes provisions for organ/full body donation
 - Names a Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare (Healthcare Proxy)
 - Power and right to make decisions on behalf of patient
- Makes care less ambiguous, less contentious, and more efficient

Advanced Directive Forms

- Each state has its own form
 - Available online or in print (usually through Attorney General's Office)
- Five Wishes Document
 - Legal in 41 states
- Caring Conversations and others, as well
- No form at all!
 - Simply needs signature and witnesses

Who Should Have an Advance Directive?

EVERYONE!

Why Doesn't Everyone Have one?

- People don't like thinking about death
 - ...especially their own
- Lack of awareness of AD forms/procedures
 - Not knowing where/how to obtain one
- Confusion about what AD is
 - Written in stone (not true!)
- Procrastination
- **DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING AND COMPLETING THE FORM**
 - Lack of time for help from physicians and other caregivers

Current Oklahoma Advanced Directive Issues

- No instructions or guidelines [Form](#)
- Written at a 15.5 grade level (Flesch–Kincaid)
- Ideal readability goal for legal/medical/official documents is 5th grade level
- 20% of Oklahomans read at or BELOW a 5th grade reading level
 - 800,000 people (2014)
- (Lack of) readability is an underlying cause to many of the hurdles to AD completion – it is one of the easier factors to address.

A More Readable AD form will mean:

- MORE people will be able to comprehend it, which should lead to...
- ...MORE people actually completing it, while requiring...
- ...LESS time and aid from their physicians and other caregivers.

More People Completing AD forms will mean:

- MORE people with clear healthcare choices with...
- ...LESS ambiguity, and ...
- ...LESS scope for disagreements among family, and ...
- ...(most importantly) MORE people having their OWN healthcare wishes followed.
- Will also result in physicians and other caregivers having one less thing to worry about (generally – and ideally – speaking)

How Do We Make a More Readable AD Form.

- Less(er) words
 - Reduce number and difficulty
 - The less words to read, the more readable it is
- Substitute Words with Blanks
 - Reduces ‘word-burden’ even further
 - Allows more of each person’s OWN thoughts and ideas.
- Default of a natural death
 - Opt-in for machine ventilation and/or tube alimentation
 - Compare ([Oklahoma Form](#) vs. [Caring Conversations pp 11 and 12](#))

How Do We Make a More Readable AD Form.

– Address Pregnancy

- Unless specifically written otherwise, artificial ventilation and tube alimentation are the default procedure for pregnant women.

– Instructions

- Make clear what the form is
- How to go about filling it out
- What alternatives there are
- Compare ([Oklahoma Form Instructions](#) vs. [Maryland Form Instructions](#))

– Possible Unbiased [Spokesperson/Guide](#)

Currently...

- Caring Conversations Form is the ideal starting point
 - Initial Reading Level: 10.9
 - After Edits, Current Reading Level: 9.7
 - Good (halfway to target level, compared to current Oklahoma form's 15.5)
 - More work will continue, on both Living Will and Healthcare Proxy sections.

In the Future...

- Design and conduct procedures to demonstrate efficiency of new form vs. old form.
 - Time necessary to fill
 - Percentage of questions/blanks completed
 - Various age and education levels
 - Will be tricky
- Push for the acceptance of new form over the old form
 - Political hurdles
 - Special interests
 - Resistance to change

Thank You

Questions and Comments, Please