Baylor Scott & White HEALTH

Advance Care Planning
Thinking about the future

We all hope to prevent illness when possible and take appropriate treatment when necessary if we become ill. Let's call prevention and treatment your Plan A.

But what if your Plan A hasn't worked and you become so ill you can't communicate?

Would your loved ones or doctors know your Plan B?

Someday almost all of us will have a serious illness. And 80 percent of persons with serious illness at some point lose the ability to communicate and make their treatment preferences known. For families who must make tough medical decisions for their loved ones without the guidance of a living will, these can be some of the most difficult burdens they have ever had to bear.

And what about the patient? We know from the evidence that patients who have a serious illness experience less pain and other suffering, receive treatment more consistent with their personal values and experience lower costs of care when they have documented their treatment preferences in a living will.

A living will helps you tell others how you wish to be treated if in the future you are so sick that you can no longer communicate.

So help your family and help yourself by thinking about your advance care plan and then documenting your desires with a living will or other advance directive today!

Free resources are available to help you make a living will or other advance directive.

Baylor Scott & White Health provides information on issues associated with serious illness as well as the Texas Living Will and other advance care planning documents. You can find and download these documents on the myDecisions page of BSWH.com, here: **BSWHealth.com/Directives**

If you prefer an online approach, go to **www.MyDirectives.com**

Here you will find an online advance care planning tool allowing you to create a universal digital advance directive. Once you create your living will with this service, you may digitally sign it, have it witnessed, store it online and share it with your care providers via electronic means.