

Heartland

Making Choices



Enriching life.

About Heartland

Heartland is a national leader in the provision of home care, hospice and I.V. services in the United States.

We are a division of HCR ManorCare, a leading provider of short-term medical care and rehabilitation for patients who have been in the hospital, as well as for those in need of long-term skilled nursing care.

As patients' health care needs change, the way in which we manage those needs also changes. This is especially true with an advanced illness. Our mission at Heartland is to support the patient and family wherever they are in their health care journey and to respect their goals and values.

At Heartland, we have promises to keep.

Our promises are:

We promise to care for the mind, body and spirit
in a way that is comforting and compassionate.

We promise to be the difference in our customers' day,
working to make every connection a personal one
and creating memorable moments that define
their Heartland experience.

We promise to discover what is important to our customers,
respect their choices and customize our service specifically to their needs.

We promise to be leaders in care delivery, corporate responsibility
and community action.

How to Use This Guide

This booklet has been created to guide you and solidify your thoughts and feelings about the end-of-life.

As you work through this guide, you will be presented with questions. Fill in the answers as you see fit.

Talk with your loved ones and caregiving team to assist you on your journey.

This booklet is not a legal document or an advance directive. Advance directives are governed by state laws and each state may use a slightly different name. Generally, there are two types of advance directives: a living will and a health care power of attorney.

A living will allows you to document your wishes concerning medical treatments you want to receive or do not want to receive if you are unable to make a decision. A health care power of attorney allows you to name a person to act on your behalf to make health care decisions for you if you become unable to make them for yourself.

For your convenience and to encourage you to complete advance directives, we have included state specific advance directive forms at the back of this booklet.

Bring this booklet with you to your next doctor's appointment and ask your doctor to discuss some of the questions posed in the guide and your responses.

A Personal Connection to Create Memorable Moments

At some point, you or a family member may be confronting a serious illness. You may be experiencing many different feelings that are uncomfortable and scary. These feelings may be difficult to talk about and even think about.

When a serious illness or injury catches you off guard, you want to make sure you have thought of everything. We know it is important for you to continue making decisions for yourself.

Making these decisions ahead of time will help your care providers know how to take care of you.

You have many choices in life, including those choices about how you want the end of your life to be. It is important to think about your options in advance and share your views with your loved ones. Then, when the time comes to make decisions, if you can't decide for yourself, your loved ones will know that they are doing what you would have wanted.

Caring for Your Mind, Body and Spirit

You come into the world as a whole person, using your mind, body and spirit to make your way, achieve your goals.

When confronted with a serious illness, it is natural to re-examine successes and failures with a new sense of urgency. The world tends to shrink as you look inward for answers to long held questions.

Your physical well-being becomes the focus of attention while your mind and spirit hide in silence. Yet, it is precisely at this time that the mind and spirit need the most attention.

Examining your life, finding meaning and coming to terms with what may be left unfinished is very natural and very important.

Questions for Discussion:

What are your feelings about death and the dying experience?

Have you experienced the death of a close family member or friend?

How did that experience shape your feelings and beliefs?

Where do you want to be when you die (i.e., at home, in a hospital, in an in-patient hospice unit)?

Do you have any special requests (i.e., specific music, candles, blankets, animals)?

Comforting and Compassionate Care

When traditional medicine can no longer offer a cure, remaining comfortable becomes the focus of care.

Tests, procedures and treatments may lose their meaning over time if they do not provide you with the comfort you are looking for.

You often become more interested in the quality of how you live your remaining days rather than how many days you have left.

Questions for Discussion:

If you are experiencing pain and nausea, would you want help controlling these symptoms?

If your doctor told you that you only had a short time to live, would you want all medical treatments possible (i.e., feeding tube, IV's, antibiotics)?

What is your idea of being treated with compassion?

Respect Patient and Family Choices

Your Right to Make Decisions

Decisions at the end of life take on greater significance because the quality of life is magnified by those decisions. Whether you are the patient or family, even the smallest decisions become most meaningful.

When You Are Unable to Make Decisions

When you are not able to make decisions because of illness and you want a particular person to make decisions for you, such as a family member, it is best to complete a state-approved form. A copy of this state-approved form can be found at the back of this booklet.

This person may be called a Health Care Power of Attorney or Health Care Agent or another title used by your particular state to legally give the person of your choice the right to decide health care matters for you.

Discover What Is Important

It is best to choose someone you feel is most aligned with your wishes. This person may or may not be a family member. Some family members may be too close to you and following your wishes may be difficult for them. You may also choose a friend.

In most states, your health care agent must be of a certain age. Please review the attached state-specific information.

It may be helpful to have a serious conversation with the person you choose. Here are some questions you can ask that may be helpful:

Are you comfortable...

- Stopping treatment that may be life-sustaining but is not helping the quality of my life?
- Consenting to admission to a nursing facility if I need that level of care?
- Interpreting my instructions if I have completed a living will?
- Applying for Medicare, Medicaid or other insurance programs that would provide financial assistance if I needed it?
- Allowing health care professionals to determine how much pain medication to give me if I have pain?
- Getting legal counsel to assist in ensuring my wishes are fulfilled?
- Acting as my decision-maker when I am unable?

Leaders in Care Delivery and Community Action

You deserve to get the care that you desire. Identifying other health care providers and community partners to meet your needs and the needs of your family will help ensure this happens. Whether you are at home, in a hospital, in an assisted living facility or in a skilled nursing center, you want to be comfortable and well-cared for.

The community service providers that may be important to you are:

Your physician: _____

Your religious/spiritual affiliation: _____

Your hospital: _____

You may have more than one physician taking care of you. When choosing a primary physician, try to answer the following questions:

- Do you feel this physician is listening to you, understands your end-of-life wishes and is willing to honor them? _____
- Is this physician open to discussing fears or concerns you have about death or the dying experience?

Customize Services to Meet Their Needs

As attention shifts from “how to prolong life?” to “how to make life more meaningful?” the journey moves you through the tough decisions about what treatments you want to keep. What treatments can help you meet your goals at this point in your life?

When you decide your focus is more toward comfort and safety and being able to control what happens to you, it is important to share what you want in order for your care providers to follow through with your requests.

You and your family have the right to choose what treatments are kept in place.

Describe in your own words, what health care options are most important to you as you continue in your journey?

How would you want to be cared for during your final days?



Use this booklet as a guide to help you think about your life and your death and to begin discussions with your loved ones, caregivers and physicians. Our Heartland team is available to meet with you and your loved ones to discuss your thoughts and choices.

