Advance Directives

Helpful Information to Consider.

In Illinois, if you do not have a Health Care Power of Attorney or a Living Will, and your Attending Physician determines that you do not have the ability to make certain decisions for yourself, there is an order of priority regarding who is allowed to make decisions for you. This is the order:
1. Your court-appointed Guardian (of the person)
2. Your spouse (including partner in a civil union but not your girlfriend or boyfriend, even if you live together)
3. Your adult child(ren)
4. Your parent
5. Your adult brother or sister
6. Your adult grandchild
7. Your close friend
8. Your legal Guardian of your estate

The above information has been simplified for the sake of clarity. If it requires further explanation, please contact your Primary Care doctor’s office and ask to speak with an Advance Care Planning Facilitator or a medical Social Worker.

IMPORTANT TERMS:
Advance Directive: is legal documentation indicating beliefs or wishes for medical care. Two of the most common types of advance directives are Health Care Power of Attorney (HCPOA) and Living Will documents.

Health Care Power of Attorney Form (HCPOA): is a legal document that states who will be your healthcare agent. A health care power of attorney form is different than a Financial POA form where an agent is named to take care of your finances and estate when you no longer can.

Living Will: is a document stating wishes for end of life care if you are terminally ill. The document states that you do not want to be kept alive by artificial means or life supporting machines. A HCPOA is considered first when you are terminally ill.

Court-appointed Guardianship: is a process through the courts involving an attorney. This may be considered in the event you do not have the ability to make decisions, we are unable to find someone as a healthcare surrogate, and you do not have advance directive forms completed.

Last Will and Testament: A document that states who you wish to receive your possessions and assets. This is not completed in a medical setting, and documents need to be notarized and witnessed.