



## MedStar Endoscopy Center

### Advanced Directive

The best person to make decisions about your medical care is you. The best time to make decisions about what kind of medical care you would like, should you become terminally ill, is in advance, while you are healthy and able to make your wishes known.

#### What is an Advance Directive?

An *advance directive* is a written or oral statement that is made and witnessed in advance of serious illness or injury describing your wishes with regard to medical decisions. An advance directive allows you to state your choices about healthcare or to name someone to make those choices for you should you become unable to make decisions about your medical treatment or care.

#### What is a Living Will?

A *living will* generally describes the type of medical care you want or do not want if you are unable to make your own decisions. It is called a living will because it takes effect while you are still living. You may wish to speak to an attorney or physician to be certain you have completed the living will in a way that your wishes will be understood.

#### What is a Healthcare Surrogate Designation?

A *healthcare surrogate designation* is a signed, dated and witnessed document naming another person such as a spouse, child or close friend as your agent to make medical decisions for you should you become unable to make them for yourself. This designation is often included in the living will.

You may wish to name a second person as an alternate, should your first choice for healthcare surrogate not be available. Be sure, however, to notify these persons that you have named them as healthcare surrogates, and inform them of your wishes. ***It is also a good idea to give them, as well as your physician and attorney, a copy of both your living will and the healthcare surrogate designation documents.***

#### Do I have to complete an Advance Directive under (state) law?

No, there is no legal requirement to complete an advance directive. However, if you have not completed an advance directive or designated a healthcare surrogate, healthcare decisions may be made for you by a court appointed guardian, your spouse, your adult child, your parent, your adult sibling, and adult relative or a close friend, in that order.

#### What if I change my mind after I have completed a Living Will and/or designated a Healthcare Surrogate?

You can change or cancel these documents at any time, either orally, or in writing.

#### What should I do with my Advance Directive?

- Make sure that someone, such as your physician, lawyer or family member knows that you have an advance directive and where it is located.
- If you have designated a healthcare surrogate, give that person a copy or the original.
- ***Give your physician and any other health care provider a copy for your medical file.***
- Keep a copy of your advance directive in a place where it can be found easily.
- Keep a card or note in your wallet or purse that states that you have an advance directive and where it is located.
- If you change your advance directive, make sure your physician, lawyer and/or family member has the latest copy.

#### Our Policy on Advance Directive

MedStar Endoscopy Center at Lutherville physicians and staff acknowledge your right to have an Advance Directive and will add it to your medical record. However, in the unlikely event of deterioration of a patient while he or she is in our Center, it is our policy to stabilize that patient and transport him/her to the closest Medicare-participating, Joint Commission-accredited hospital with a copy of the Advance Directive if made available to us. More information regarding Advance Directives in Maryland is available at <http://www.caringinfo.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3289>.