

# ADVANCE DIRECTIVES AND LIVING WILLS

While Emory students are generally very healthy, none of us ever knows if or when we will become incapacitated and unable to make decisions about life sustaining treatment in the face of catastrophic illness or injury. Therefore, as a service to our Emory students, here are some definitions (courtesy of the Emory Healthcare website) and resources that may help you:

**Advance Directives** are documents written in advance of a serious illness or injury that state your choices about medical treatment or name someone to make choices for you, if you become unable to make decisions.

A **Living Will** is a document in which you can instruct your physician to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining procedures if you are terminally ill, in a coma, or in a persistent vegetative state with no reasonable likelihood of recovering. It must be signed in the presence of a witness who is not related to you by blood or marriage and will attest to your soundness of mind and to the fact that you made the living will, willingly and voluntarily.

A **Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare** is another kind of advance directive; a signed, dated and witnessed legal document in which you can name another person, an agent, to make medical decisions for you if you become unable to make them.

You can obtain a living will and durable power of attorney for healthcare forms from a variety of sources. We have fill-in-the-blank copies of these forms at Student Health Services. Just ask us the next time you are in the office. You can also obtain forms from the Medical Association of Georgia, the State Bar Association, and the Georgia Hospital Association. If you prefer a downloadable version, upon which you can type/insert your name, etc., you can go to the Emory Healthcare website at:

<http://www.emoryhealthcare.org/patient-relations/pdfs/georgia-advance-directive2007.pdf>

Planning in advance of medical catastrophe can save your loved ones a tremendous amount of suffering, turmoil and conflict. God willing, none of us will ever go there.