

Recommended Reading on Advance Healthcare Directives (AHD)

One issue that can be challenging for both families and healthcare workers is making decisions for loved ones who cannot care for themselves. Often, the best solution is to prepare an Advance Healthcare Directive, (AHD), which states what end-of-life actions should or should not be taken to prolong your life if you should become incapacitated. The AHD also names the “proxy,” or decision-maker, whom will make final decisions on your behalf.

Here are our recommended readings on Advance Healthcare Directives:

1. *Advance Directives and the Pursuit of Death with Dignity* by Norman L. Cantor

This is an excellent book on Advance Directives, written from a legal point of view. The author is a professor of law, who contributed to New Jersey’s model legislation for Advance Directives, which is among the most comprehensive and liberal in the US. The book includes criticisms of the limitations of ‘living will’ laws in several states, and suggests improvements.

2. *Deciding for Others: The Ethics of Surrogate Decision Making* by Allen E. Buchanan & Dan W. Brock

Buchanan’s book is a thought-provoking, and comprehensive look at medical decision-making for those who are incapable of making their own decisions. This book is helpful for anyone who cares for those who cannot care for or make medical decisions for themselves.

3. *Taking Advance Directives Seriously: Prospective Autonomy and Decisions near the End of Life,*
by Robert S. Olick

The author recognizes that both doctors and hospitals often ignore AHDs because their own standards of care are more familiar to them. This book is both philosophical and technical, and raises many valid concerns that should be considered when creating a comprehensive AHD.

4. *Health Care Directives by Margaret C. Jasper*

This legal almanac consists of over 70 guides for the layperson on all aspects of the law. Each volume includes an overview of the topic followed by chapters on the major issues discussed on that subject. Each volume has an appendix containing several primary source documents as well as practical forms and checklists. A glossary defines technical terms found in the text.

5. *Making Sense of Advance Directives by Nancy M. P. King*

Nancy M.P. King provides a legal, philosophical, and historical analysis of the moral and legal force of advance directives. She explains the types and models of advance directives currently in use and offers guidelines for individuals seeking to write, read, and use directives. This book provides a comprehensive overview of advance directives and clear, practical directions for writing and interpreting them.

6. *Culture, Ethics, and Advance Care Planning*
by Alissa Hurwitz Swota

This book serves as a guide to best practices for advance care planning in a multicultural society. It will help those involved in the delicate discussions that take place during advance care planning to do so in a culturally sensitive manner.