

Let your loved ones know what level of medical care you want

April 16th is National Healthcare Decisions Day; advance directive info available

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“If you don’t make the decisions, someone else will”

PHOENIX (April 12, 2019) – If you were in a life-threatening accident, would your family know what level of medical care you wanted? Do you want healthcare workers to do everything possible to keep you alive? Even if it means artificial life support? Ventilators? Feeding tubes?

April 16 is National Healthcare Decisions Day, a nationally recognized day designated to encourage people to begin having conversations with loved ones about the level of medical care they want to receive if they can no speak for themselves.

Sixty-three percent of American adults have not completed any form of advance directive, according to a recent comprehensive study at the [University of Pennsylvania](#).

[Sound on tape: Dr. Kilzer speaks about advance directives; other providers, social workers, patients' families available for interviews](#)

“Patients often come to the hospital without an advance directive,” said Helen Kilzer (pronounced Kil-zer), MD, a palliative care specialist at Banner Health’s McKee Medical Center. “Sometimes it is a crisis and families will do anything to keep their loved ones alive and ask for any type of medical treatment to keep their loved one alive even if they know you may not want that treatment.

“If you don’t make the decisions, someone else will.”

Kilzer says there many helpful online guides to advance directives and end-of-life planning; she recommends [Five Wishes](#). “It is a very gentle approach to teaching people what your wishes should be. It is a good place to start the discussions.”

In thinking about end-of-life care, Kilzer says there several documents that may be helpful:

- **Medical durable power of attorney** – identifies and formally recognizes the person or persons that you trust most to make decisions. “It is the single most important document that we can have.”
- **Living will**: Lists and describes the different types of medical care and how much medical care you want in certain circumstances.

About Banner Health

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