

Talking with your clinician about the future

At your scheduled visit, your clinician would like to talk with you about your illness, your goals and wishes, and planning for the future. This is an important part of the care we provide for all of our patients.

Our team likes to start talking about this when patients are doing okay. Your illness is serious but stable, so now is a good time to talk about what is ahead, and to do some planning for the future. Patients who think through what is important to them and what their wishes are often feel less anxious, more at peace, and more in control of their situation.

Before your next meeting

Please prepare for your conversation by thinking about these things:

- ‘ What would you like to know about your illness and what is likely to be ahead?
- ‘ What kind of information would help you make decisions about your future?
- ‘ What is most important for you to have a good quality of life?
- ‘ What are you afraid of about your illness?
- ‘ What kinds of medical care do you not want?
- ‘ What do you think it would be like to share these thoughts with your family?
- ‘ If you haven’t already identified a health care proxy, who would be able to fill that role?

Please bring to your visit:

- ‘ If you have a health care proxy form that is not on file at the hospital, *please bring a copy*.
- ‘ If you have a living will or advance directive, *please bring a copy*.

If you don’t have these documents or have questions about them, talk to your clinician.

Why is this important?

Thinking about and sharing your wishes will give you more control over the care you get. It will also help prepare your loved ones to make decisions for you if you can’t make them at some point in the future. Knowing what you want will ease the burden on your family of making hard decisions for you if you can’t speak for yourself.

Talking about the future won’t change your ongoing care

Talking about the future won’t change the plans we have made so far about your treatment, unless, of course, you want to. We will keep providing the best possible care to control your disease.

You may find it helpful to bring other people to your next appointment

You can choose to bring the person who is your health care proxy or other family members to your next visit so they can be a part of the conversation. You can also bring your nurse practitioner, social worker, or chaplain if you like. Please let your clinician’s office know if you would like to bring others to the appointment.

We understand that your wishes may change over time

This is the beginning of an ongoing conversation. We know that you may have other questions or concerns in the future. We will keep being here to support you and answer your questions so that you can make informed decisions.

