

APPROACHING END OF LIFE

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)

As one approaches end of life, there should be frank and open discussion about what should be done in the event of a life-threatening emergency. A decision may be made by the patient and family to pursue a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order. A DNR order means that no lifesaving techniques will occur in the event of the loss of heartbeat and/or breathing. These wishes must be declared to a physician, and signed documentation must be completed. A copy of this signed document must be shown to emergency personnel. A "living will" alone is often not enough to ensure these wishes are carried out. There are resources available to help individuals write a living will, and related legal documents, taking into account each state's laws. One example is uslegalforms.com or 1-877-389-0141



Choosing Hospice Care

If advancing Parkinson symptoms cause continued decline and medical complications, hospice support may be added to continue care at home or within a home-like setting. Many people think of hospice services as only for people living with terminal cancer. In fact, hospice services are available to anyone with limited life expectancy, and emphasize comfort care rather than aggressive treatment. Quality, rather than quantity, of life is stressed and hospice services may offer options to reduce caregiver stress and burnout. Emotional, spiritual and practical support is provided based on individual needs and concerns. Professional medical care continues throughout the hospice process, and many families find these support services invaluable during this difficult time.

- Talk to your physician to see if a hospice referral is indicated.
- Check to see if hospice services will be covered by insurance, and if there are any associated costs.
- Discuss hospice choices with your health care team prior to making a selection.
- Seek hospice services from an accredited agency.
- Ask for written information about available services.
- Find out criteria for inpatient or nursing home admission while in hospice.
- Ask about respite volunteer services through hospice.

Excerpt from NPF Publication Managing Advance Parkinson's Disease