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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Advance Directives

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How many people are prepared for that Medical Emergency when decisions need to be made and they are not able to state their wishes for their Health Care needs? **Not Many!**

Advance Directives are not intended just for the elderly or widowed. It is for any and all adults, and designed to support the wishes and decisions made by a competent adult before that emergency occurs and they are unable to act or speak for themselves.

What is an Advance Directive? An Advance Directive is a document that tells your doctor what kind of care you would like to have if you become unable to make a medical decision (if you are in a coma for example). A good advance directive describes the kind of treatment you would want depending on how sick you are.

There are different types of Advance Directives. One is a **Living Will**. This is a written, legal document that describes the kind of medical treatments or life-sustaining treatments you want if you were seriously or terminally ill. A Living Will does not let you select someone to make decisions for you.

DPOA (Durable Power of Attorney) is another kind of Advance Directive. There are different types of DPOA, one for finance and one for Health Care (DPOAHC). This document states who you have chosen to make health care decisions for you when you are unable to make them for yourself. It usually becomes active any time you are unconscious or unable to make a medical decision. Selecting a DPOA is your decision. It is suggested that if you choose to have a DPOA, that it be someone you trust to respect your health care wishes.

The other very important type of Advance Directive is the **DNR** (Do Not Resuscitate) order. This is a request to NOT have cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if your heart stops or if you stop breathing. You can use an advance directive form or tell your doctor that you do not want CPR. That will create a DNR order and is accepted by doctors and hospitals in all states.

If you are interested in obtaining an Advance Directive you may contact your doctor's office or contact your local health department or State Agency on Aging to get the forms.

If you have any topics that you would like to see discussed in this column please call Maryanne at (603) 747-9189 or email maldrich@cottagehospital.org

Cottage Hospital is a 25 bed, critical access hospital serving the beautiful Upper Connecticut River Valley. For additional information regarding Cottage Hospital and any of its services please call (603)747-9000 or stop by and visit us at 90 Swiftwater Road, Woodsville, NH.

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