

Document	Definition	Pros	Cons	Comments
Living Will (LW)	Person directs kind/extent of care they want or do not want, including withdrawal of life-sustaining treatments when they lack capacity and in terminal or persistent vegetative state	Must be honored unless an MDPOA is given express authority to override	Only in effect when patient lacks DMC and in terminal condition or PVS as determined by two doctors	Very narrow, inflexible. There are many variations which can cause confusion.
CPR Directive	Colorado state form documenting refusal of CPR in the event person's heart or breathing stops.	To be honored by all EMS, facilities.	Does not instruct on how much to intervene on other pre-death care: dialysis, transfusions, and intubation for distress only, etc.	Order across settings; only effective in cardio-pulmonary arrest.
Medical Durable Power of Attorney (MDPOA)	Agent appointed by patient to make decisions when patient lacks capacity, temporarily or permanently	MDPOA has broad range of authority to respond to situation at hand according to patient values.	Patient must have shared values with agent. Only for healthcare decisions.	Most important way for patient wishes to be expressed. Patient can fire agent. Standard DPA cannot make medical decisions.
MOST form (CO): (Medical Orders for Scope of Treatment)	Orders (not directives) signed by patient (or representative) and health care provider to determine treatment wishes near end of life.	Orders are to be fully honored by all providers in all settings in Colorado.	Intended only for patients with chronic, serious or advanced illness.	Newer, broader scope than CPR directives. Wide range treatment choices can be expressed. (POLST in other states.)
Proxy decision maker for health care	Surrogate when patient lacks decisional capacity but hasn't designated an agent (MDPOA). Selected by "interested persons" as one who can best speak for the patient's wishes/best interest.	Provides consent or refusal for interventions by representing patient in giving "informed consent."	Family and friends may disagree, causing significant stress. Proxy cannot withhold artificial hydration, nutrition in most instances. (Many providers unaware of process.)	Less freedom than MDPOA appointed by patient for medical decisions. Much of process left to chance.
Starter Kit from Conversation Project	Worksheet to facilitate conversations about "what matters most", at least at present time.	Focus on values, not abstract future choices re. procedures that may /may not be useful then.	Not legal forms, but rather documentation of discussions. Discussions need to be ongoing.	Helpful to MDPOA and loved ones in learning how to make future decisions in unknowable situations.
Five Wishes	Privately produced legally accepted document executed by patient to express preferences for medical treatment, pre & post-death wishes.	Offers opportunity to express wide range of peri-death wishes. Includes LW, MDPOA, values.	Procedure based medical wishes; not very useful as guide in many clinical situations. Legally accepted in some states only.	Wishes are intended to be followed; proxies or MDPOA may override.