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Legal Brief*

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* The information set out in this document is not a legal interpretation.

The masculine is used to designate persons solely in order to simplify the text.

Writing Your Advance Medical Directives

What do we really mean by advance medical directives?

In everyday life, when you need medical care, the doctor must ask for your permission before treating you.

The government has put a new system into place so that you can decide, as of right now, whether or not you wish to receive treatment in the future, should you be unable to authorize it, for example, if you are in a coma or suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

You can therefore plan these decisions in advance, instead of leaving the burden to your loved ones in case of illness or accident.

This procedure is different from asking for physician-assisted dying.

The Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec has prepared and made available a form in which you can indicate your advance medical directives. The Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec has identified five treatments you may refuse. With this document, you can notify hospital health care staff whether or not you accept those treatments, namely:

- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
- Respirator-assisted ventilation;
- Dialysis treatment;
- Forced or artificial feeding;
- Forced or artificial hydration.

Advance medical directives can be made by downloading the form from the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec website¹ or by calling 1-800-561-9749. You will then have to fill out the form, give it to your doctor or a relative, or return it to the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec. By returning the form directly to the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec, you will ensure that a note is placed in your medical file. If you are admitted to hospital in the event of an accident and you are unable to give your consent to care, the health care staff has an obligation to consult your file and follow your directives. That way, you can avoid a medical struggle.

Finally, you should note that organ donations will always be possible and that the care needed to ensure your comfort and relieve your pain will always be given to you.

Naturally, our situation and needs can change over time. Therefore, as long as you are still competent, you can change or cancel your advance medical directives at any time.

¹ <https://www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca/en/citizens/health-insurance/issue-directives-case-incapacity>