

RESOURCES

You may access, download, and print a form for writing your Mental Health Advance Directive, as well as a Guidance Booklet, from the Internet. You will find these at www.ndpanda.org (P&A's homepage) under "publications". P&A also has printed copies available.

If you have questions or want help with writing your Mental Health Advance Directive, the Protection & Advocacy Project (P&A) will try to connect you with a trained individual who can provide you with assistance. Please let us know what you need.

P&A does not discriminate in admission or access to, or employment in, its programs and activities.

If accommodations are needed as a result of a disability, or if you need this material in an alternative format, please contact P&A.

Protection & Advocacy Project

400 E. Broadway, Suite 409
Bismarck, ND 58501

Phone: (701) 328-2950
Toll free: 1-800-472-2670
TDD relay: 711
E-mail: panda@nd.gov
Website: www.ndpanda.org



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MENTAL HEALTH ADVANCE DIRECTIVES



North Dakota

Developed by the
Protection & Advocacy
Project and its
Advisory Council for the
Protection & Advocacy of
Individuals with
Mental Illness
(PAIMI)

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Mental Health Advance Directives

Many decisions may be made for you if you have a mental health crisis or are involuntarily committed and lose capacity to make treatment decisions.

Examples may include:

- choice of hospital
- types of treatment
- who should be notified

Unfortunately, at the time of crisis, you may not be able to make your wishes known. You may end up with others making decisions for you that you would not make for yourself.



If you're concerned that you may be subject to involuntary psychiatric commitment or treatment at some time in the future, you can prepare a legal document in advance to express your choices about mental health treatment. This document is commonly referred to as a *mental health advance directive*. You may also appoint an alternative decision-maker, or agent, to make treatment decisions for you if you become unable to express choices on your own behalf.

Mental health advance directives differ from general health care directives which usually dictate decisions about extraordinary health care measures and end-of-life treatments that the patient has generally not actually experienced. Individuals with mental illness are often dealing with chronic illnesses and have experience with the treatments. The goal of a mental health advance directive is to maximize the chances of recovery while minimizing unwanted interventions.

There are many benefits to writing a mental health advance directive.



- It allows you to make decisions about treatment before the time that you may actually need it.
- It allows you to make informed decisions when your mental health is at its best and to make your wishes clearly known.
- It may shorten your hospital stay.
- It may prevent the need for a guardian.
- It can improve communication between you and your doctor.
- It may prevent unwanted types of treatment.