

Have you ever thought about how complicated the legal system has made our lives? There are times when I hear about different law suits and court actions and I want to scream at the stupidity of our court systems time being filled with frivolous cases. I understand that there is a need for attorneys and that many of the cases they handle are important and involve human rights; however there are also many cases that they handle that have no merit. Instead of people thinking of attorneys as helping individuals, they see them as publicity seekers looking for big cuts of high settlements.

Due to the complications of the legalities of the health care centers all of us need to make sure that our wishes are well known and documented in our medical chart regarding our feeling of advanced life support and other end of life issues. Getting this done is not a complicated process and you do not have to have an attorney to do it; however many of us put it off until it is too late or until someone close to us is put into an end of life situation. I feel very strongly that I do not want any advance life support measures taken to extend my life. I would not want to put my family through this nor do I want to rack up extensive medical bills lying in a vegetative state. So often when advance life support measures are taken there is brain damage involved. I have spent many years working with people that have had traumatic brain injuries and so often I see them unable to get over the things in their life that they have lost. There are many other people that feel that they want to be kept alive for as long as possible using any means available in the hope that medical advancement will find a cure or reversal for their medical problem.

No matter what your wishes regarding advanced life support you should have them noted and witnessed and placed in your medical chart. If you do not have your wishes placed in writing the medical staff has no choice but to use all measures available to them to sustain your life. Having had verbalized your wishes to your next of kin or even your doctor will not keep the medical personal from using life sustaining equipment. In the case of an accident that might occur outside of your regular medical service area the medical staff will connect machines to you; however they will remove them once your wishes are reviewed from your medical records. These are topics that are not easy to talk about; however at the time of a crisis it is nice to have a signed document to rely on.