

COMPASSION

IN DYING

SUPPORTING YOUR CHOICES AT THE END OF LIFE

FACTSHEET – Talking to your doctor about your Advance Decision

It is important that you speak to your doctor about your Advance Decision and any wishes you have for treatment in the future.

Most doctors are well informed about Advance Decisions and should support you to make yours.

This factsheet covers some issues that people have experienced when speaking to their doctor about their Advance Decision. If you have a question that is not covered here, please contact Compassion in Dying.

INFORMATION LINE: **0800 999 2434**

My doctor won't sign the GP declaration

A doctor's signature on your Advance Decision is not a legal requirement. Your Advance Decision is still legally binding even if your GP does not sign it.

The GP declaration is used to:

- Show that your doctor has discussed your Advance Decision with you and made sure that you understand the consequences of the choices you have made.
- Show that you had mental capacity at the time when you made the Advance Decision.

If your GP won't sign your Advance Decision, try to speak to them about their concerns. They might feel that they are being asked to condone a decision which they do not agree with. Compassion in Dying can write to your doctor to explain the purpose of the GP declaration if necessary.

My doctor charges to sign Advance Decisions

Doctors can charge for non-medical services such as signing insurance certificates and passport applications. However, your doctor should not charge you to discuss your Advance Decision with you or sign the GP declaration.

Your doctor's signature shows that you understand the consequences of your decisions. It also helps hospital healthcare professionals to be more confident that they are following your wishes.

If your doctor insists on charging you for signing your Advance Decision, please let Compassion in Dying know.

My doctor won't keep a copy of my Advance Decision

Advance Decisions to refuse treatment are legally binding. However, some doctors may have a conscientious objection to your refusing treatment if this means your life is shortened.

Your doctor does not have to do anything that goes against their beliefs. However, they should not simply refuse to support you to make an Advance Decision.

If your doctor has a strong objection to your refusing life-sustaining treatment, ask to be referred to another doctor.

How can we help?

- We can write to your doctor about **Advance Decisions** and the **GP declaration**
- We can send your doctor an **Advance Decision toolkit for health professionals**
- Call our free **Information Line** if you have any other questions

181 Oxford Street
London W1D 2JT
Information Line **0800 999 2434**
Email info@compassionindying.org.uk
www.compassionindying.org.uk