



# Advance Health Directives

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This guideline supports the application of MP 0053/17 *Patient Alert Policy*.

If a patient has an Advance Health Directive (AHD) a patient alert should be raised for the patient.

An AHD is a voluntary, person-led legal document completed by an adult with full legal capacity that focuses on an individual's values and preferences for future care decisions, including their preferred outcomes and care.

It specifies the treatment(s) for which consent is provided or refused under specific circumstances and only comes into effect if the person becomes incapable of communicating their preferences and decisions. The term 'treatment' includes medical, surgical, and dental treatments, including palliative care and life-sustaining measures.

An AHD would come into effect only if it applied to the treatment a person required and only if the person was unable to make reasoned judgements about a treatment decision at the time that the treatment was required.

When a patient presents to hospital (whether as an emergency presentation or a direct admission) it is important to identify as early as possible if a patient has an AHD. If they are unsure or cannot communicate, staff should ask their family/carer and/or GP, check patient records and My Health Record.

If the patient has an AHD, ensure the presence of the patient's AHD is recorded as a clinical alert and filed within the patient's medical record. This will ensure health professionals are aware of the patient's treatment decision at the time of care.

The presence of an AHD alert (M11.02) on the PAS provides a flag that identifies that an AHD exists for the patient. The details of the AHD are not stored on the PAS. On identifying an AHD alert, the doctor should discuss the AHD with the patient or the family/carer to ensure it is valid and/or the treatment decisions reflect the patient's current preferences. The treating team should discuss the content of AHDs and other advance care planning documents during Goals of Patient Care (GoPC) and ensure GoPC forms align with the patient's AHD.

It is important that the treating team be familiar with the patient's AHD and their treatment decisions and care preferences.

Please refer to the Advance Health Directives webpage for further information.

[www.health.wa.gov.au/AHD](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/AHD)

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