

SIXTY PLUS SERVICES

# End-of-Life Care and Considerations



*How will I live out my life? What kind of care and treatments do I want if I am in poor health? Where would I like to die? What are the details of my final arrangements? Who will make healthcare decisions for me if I can't make them for myself?*

Complex questions for the increasingly complicated world of healthcare – and yet questions that we need to ask now, more than ever. New medical technologies may allow us to live to an advanced old age. More effective medications, dialysis, heart defibrillators and pacemakers may keep many of us surviving decades longer than our parents and grandparents, even if our overall health is frail and declining. Many diseases, which would previously have been terminal, are now much less threatening. Even victims of extreme trauma are able to live for a long time. There are no easy answers. We will all die eventually, but for many of us dying may be a lingering process, rather than the sudden event commonly experienced in previous generations. Because we die differently now, there are different issues we may want to consider.

## **HARD CONVERSATIONS WITH THOSE WHO ARE CLOSE TO YOU**

You've probably heard of advance directives, the documents in which you can record your healthcare wishes, as well as the disposition of your property and assets. But completing written advance directives is only part of what's needed. You also need to tell your loved ones exactly what your wishes are. Try to do this in a group situation so that multiple family members and friends can hear first hand just what you want. Of course, you also need to back up these important conversations with written instructions – the Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare, and the Living Will, at the very least – you can always go back and rewrite them if your wishes change. But tell those who are close to you exactly what you want. The more often you have these difficult conversations, the easier they become.



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## **THINK ABOUT WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU**

You may assume that your spouse will outlive you, and take care of you when you're sick. But what if this doesn't happen? Do you have another available family member who can step in to take over? What if you're unmarried? What if other family members or close friends all have outside jobs? What if they live far away? Who will become your caregiver if there isn't an obvious choice? Caregiving is now so common that it is an expected stage of the American life cycle. After we retire from the workforce, chances are we'll be caring for a parent, or spouse, or other loved one for many years. Try not to make assumptions about who will fill this role for you. Try to plan ahead as much as possible.

## **HOW WE CAN HELP**

Sixty Plus licensed clinical social workers are specialists in advance care planning. They can answer your questions about end-of-life care, whether you have general questions about the future, or if you are caring for someone who may be terminally ill. They can explain hospice care, palliative care, the importance of signing advance directives, and the financial costs that potentially can be incurred for those families facing an end-of-life situation. Contact us to schedule an appointment at **404.605.3867**.



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## **SIXTY PLUS SERVICES**

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