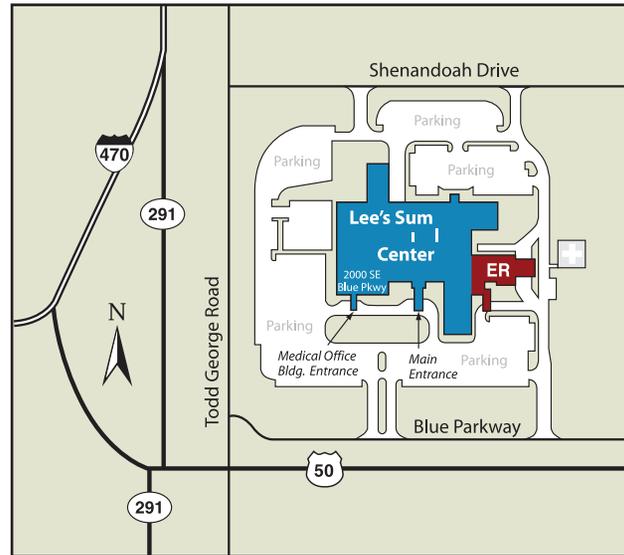


Ethics Consultations

Each hospital must have a process to help with difficult ethical dilemmas. Most hospitals have an Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee serves those who need consultation, discussion, support or assistance in facing choices and resolving ethical conflicts. While an ethics committee cannot mandate any particular course of action, such as treatment or no treatment, it can make suggestions and help patients, family and providers explore various options. Ethics committees are “multi-disciplinary” and consist of physicians, nurses, a hospital administrator, representatives from the community, a minister, a social worker, and occasionally other individuals such as patient representatives, psychologists, attorneys, etc. Consultations with the Ethics Committee are informal and non-judgmental. There is no charge for this service. If you want to request help with difficult choices or discuss ethical questions or issues with someone on the Ethics Committee, please contact your nurse. A member of the Ethics Committee or the hospital staff will contact you, and if a full consultation is appropriate and available, the Ethics committee will meet with you. The patient/family and possibly others involved in the care will be invited. We believe that through open and honest discussion in a non-judgmental atmosphere, ethical concerns affecting the care of the patient can be resolved. For more information or assistance regarding issues discussed in this document, please contact your nurse, physician, or our Case Management Department.



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plans in the Kansas City area.***

Advance Directive



Your Rights
Regarding Healthcare
Treatment Decisions





Adults who have capacity and have been informed as to the nature of their illness and their treatment options have the right to consent or refuse any healthcare treatment. This includes the right to forgo treatment or to have treatment withdrawn after it is started. This right extends to any medical treatment or procedure including surgery, respirators, antibiotics, cardiac resuscitation, diagnostic tests and tube feedings. If you have decided to refuse treatments you believe are more of a burden than a benefit, your doctors and nurses will continue to provide you comfort and care. Such choices can be made by telling a physician your wishes regarding your healthcare treatment. Also, it is suggested that you write out your wishes if you are later unable to communicate them. This process of writing down your wishes for future treatment can be accomplished by completing an advance directive. There are several types of advance directive documents: a living will, a healthcare treatment directive (HCTD) and a durable power of attorney for healthcare (DPAHC). If you already have an advance directive, please let your nurse and physician know immediately. It is critical that you discuss any healthcare directives with your family and healthcare providers.

Living Wills

A living will is a written, signed, dated and witnessed document that allows individuals to state that they do not want death-prolonging procedures performed. Living wills are effective only if you have a terminal condition, will die in a short time and are unable to communicate your wishes.

Healthcare Treatment Directives

A healthcare treatment directive is a statement of your wishes to be used if you are unable to speak for yourself. You may request that any procedure prolonging the dying process be withheld or withdrawn. Treatments that relieve pain and suffering are never discontinued. HCTDs are effective when you are no longer able to communicate your wishes. Even if you are not terminally ill, you may request through an HCTD that treatment be withdrawn or withheld should it be unlikely to help you to recover and have an acceptable quality of life. You may also request that treatments be provided. Examples of such terminal conditions might include an overwhelming illness or injury in which recovery is not likely; a comatose condition such as with some severe strokes; and the final stages of a dementing illness such as Alzheimer's.

Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare (DPAHC)

The DPAHC provides you with the right to name an individual as an agent to make healthcare decisions for you should you ever be in a situation where you are not able to make your own decisions. You may choose anyone you trust to speak for you to assist your healthcare providers in determining treatment options you would have chosen for yourself. In Missouri the DPAHC must be notarized. In Kansas it may either be witnessed by two individuals or notarized.

Additional Information

You may revoke a living will, HCTD or a durable power of attorney at any time. If you wish to revoke or modify one of these documents, please notify your physician or nurse. You may contact your nurse, physician, social worker, patient representative or chaplain to receive further information and instructions on advance directives. Forms that meet the requirements of Kansas and Missouri are available for these advance directives. Your attorney may also draft such documents for you. This hospital recognizes both state and federal laws that entitle patients to make personal healthcare treatment decisions. All patients will be provided an appropriate level of care whether or not they have put in writing their wishes about healthcare treatments. Advance directives assist us with providing you the care you believe to be appropriate to your situation.

If you need additional information or have questions, please contact our Care Management Department at 816-282-5680 or dial the Operator and ask her to page the Case Manager on duty.

