The presence of an Advance Directive in a medical record indicates the patient's preference for continued medical care and should be noted and followed.

The parent(s) or guardian(s) of a minor child will at all times be included in the decision-making process regarding the course of treatment for the patient.

ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

DEFINITION:

1. Advance directives are documents allowing patients to give direction about future medical care. There are two types:

    a. Living Will - Written instructions explaining wishes regarding healthcare should the patient have a terminal condition.

    b. Durable Power of Attorney - Written document naming a person to make decisions for the patient if patient becomes unable to do so.

2. Patients with advanced directives are responsible for informing their physicians of their wishes.

POLICY:

1. After receiving a patient brochure at the physician's office, the patient is requested to bring a copy of the advance directive with them on the day of service.

2. In order to determine if a patient has a living will or durable power of attorney, the patient is questioned during the preoperative nursing review during the signing of the consent form.

PROCEDURE:

1. During the preoperative interview, the patient is questioned as to whether or not they have an advance directive. If the patient has either a living will or a durable power of attorney, the preoperative staff will document this on the pre-op assessment form. If possible, a copy will be placed in the patient's chart. The chart will be marked with a "Living Will" label to inform all staff caring for the patient of the presence of an advance directive.

2. Staff and/or anesthesia will explain this facility's policy is not to honor advance directives. The patient is then given the option to have case done elsewhere if they wish.

3. In the event of a patient transfer or transfer of medical records from this facility to another, the advance directive should always be part of the record sent.