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I strongly support the creation a Statewide Repository for Advanced Directives through the Attorney General's office. As an RN, I worked for 10 years in the Emergency Room, and now 10 years in the area of end of life care. I currently work with people on a regular basis in my capacity as the TLC/Palliative Coordinator at St. Peter's who want to sort out with their family members their goals of care, and what kinds of treatment they would and would not want, should their condition worsen. Since more and more people are living with chronic progressive illnesses, the creation of an advance directive becomes extremely important to guide physicians and health care clinicians.

While in the ER, I encountered and participated in resuscitation efforts that probably should not have ever started, but due to our lack of awareness of advance directives, and the recognition that without that patient-created guideline, we were obligated to try procedures that were likely futile. Often the focus was on care options that were not likely to restore function, and not on options that supported families, or brought about acceptance or life closure.

So much public education needs to occur around Advance Directives! Some people tell me that their Living Will is in the safety deposit box! If a crisis in a persons health status occurs the ER and the physician needs immediate access to an advance directives repository to fully follow a persons wishes. Unbeknownst to most persons, CPR is actually only effective in about 5% of persons with advanced age, and multiple health problems, and effective in about 15% of the general population! When began my work as Transitions and Life Choices (TLC) coordinator, I spoke to each area of the hospital, asking "what would you most hope to see come out of this program?". The folks in the Emergency Room stated resoundingly: "quick clear careful ability to review a person's advance directive, while the ambulance is rolling in their direction, and before CPR starts."

People tell me that if they are nearing death the things that are important are dignity, cleanliness, information, and caring. They often have trouble talking about death, and "Final Things", because it feels like talking about it brings it magically closer. No one wants to be abandoned when crisis occurs. The creation of a State Wide Repository for Advanced Directive is one of the many steps that will promote appropriate care, family support, enhanced utilization of resources, and allow clearer guidelines quickly available for health care professionals.

I urge you to support this bill. Thank you for your interest.