



## Section 1: Administrative / Medical Control

### GUIDELINE/PROCEDURES: ADVANCED DIRECTIVES-DNR ORDERS

#### PURPOSE

- Ideally, any patient presenting to the EMS system with a valid DNR form shall have the form honored and CPR and ALS therapy withheld in the event of cardiac arrest.
- To honor the end of life wishes of the patient
- To prevent the initiation of unwanted resuscitation

#### PROCEDURE

Ohio's DNR Comfort Care is the only law encompassing EMS. For any other type of DNR documents, you must contact Medical Control and describe your circumstances to a Physician. The Physician will then decide if EMS should honor the DNR document, or begin resuscitation of the patient. This includes the Ohio Living Will or any other document to this effect.

A DNR order for a patient of a healthcare facility shall be considered current in accordance with the facility's policy. A DNR order for a patient outside a healthcare facility shall be considered current unless discontinued by the patient's attending physician / CNP / CNS, or revoked by the patient. EMS personnel are not required to research whether a DNR order that appears to be current has been discontinued.

#### STATE OF OHIO DNR COMFORT CARE GUIDELINES

Under its DNR Comfort Care Protocol, the Ohio Department of Health has established two standardized DNR order forms. Ohio State Medical Board web site: <http://www.med.ohio.gov/>

##### **DNR Comfort Care – Terminally ill condition and in effect at all times.**

##### **DNR Comfort Care – Arrest – In effect in the event of a cardiac or respiratory arrest.**

When completed by a doctor (or certified nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist, as appropriate), these standardized DNR orders allow patients to choose the extent of the treatment they wish to receive at the end of life. Ohio DNR Comfort Care can be identified by the original / copy of the State of Ohio DNR Comfort Care Form with official DNR logo, a DNR Comfort Care necklace, bracelet, or card with official DNR Comfort Care logo, the form must be completed with effective date and signed by the patient's physician. To enact the DNR Comfort Care, the patient must be experiencing a terminal event. EMS is not required to search for a DNR identification but should make a reasonable attempt to identify that the patient is the person named in the DNR Comfort Care form. If in Doubt, Contact Medical Control. Only the patient or Health Care Power of Attorney when patient is incapacitated may request reversal of the DNR – Comfort Care.

#### **CARE to be provided by EMS:**

- Suction the airway
- Administer oxygen
- Position for comfort
- Splint or immobilize
- Control bleeding
- Provide pain medication
- Provide emotional support
- Contact other appropriate health care providers (hospice, home health, attending physician or certified nurse)

#### **Care NOT to be provided by EMS:**

- Administer chest compressions
- Insert artificial airway
- Administer resuscitative drugs
- Defibrillate or cardiovert
- Provide respiratory assistance (other than described above)
- Initiate resuscitative IV
- Initiate cardiac monitoring



## Section 1: Administrative / Medical Control

### GUIDELINE/PROCEDURES: ADVANCED DIRECTIVES-DNR ORDERS-cont.

- The DNR order addresses your current state of health and the kind of medical treatment you and your physician decide is appropriate under current circumstances.
- A DNR order for a patient of a health care facility shall be considered current in accordance with the facility's policy. A DNR order for a patient outside a health care facility shall be considered current unless discontinued by the patient's attending physician / CNP / CNS, or revoked by the patient. EMS personnel are not required to research whether a DNR order that appears to be current has been discontinued.
- It is imperative that a copy of the original DNR / Comfort Care orders and identification accompany the patient wherever the patient goes. This will help to alleviate any confusion between health care givers at multiple sites.
- Be careful to check the patient's DNR order or DNR identification to determine if DNR - CC or DNR - CC Arrest.
- EMS is not required to search a person to see if they have DNR identification. If any of the DNR identifiers are in the possession of the patient, EMS must make a reasonable attempt to identify the patient by patient's name given by patient, family, caregiver or friend, health care worker who knows the patient, ID band from health care institution, driver's license or other picture I.D. If identification cannot be verified, the protocol should be followed.
- The patient may request resuscitation even if he / she is a DNR Comfort Care or DNR Comfort Care-Arrest Patient and / or the DNR Comfort Care Protocol has already been activated. The patient's request for resuscitation amounts to a revocation of any or all DNR Comfort Care Status and resuscitative efforts must be activated.
- If EMS has responded to an emergency situation by initiating any of the "will not perform actions" prior to confirming that the DNR Comfort Care Protocol must be activated, discontinue them when you activate the protocol. You may continue respiratory assistance, IV medications, etc, that have been part of the patient's ongoing course of treatment for their underlying condition or disease.
- If the patient's family or bystanders request or demand resuscitation for a patient for whom the DNR Comfort Care Protocol has been activated, do not proceed with resuscitation. Provide "will perform actions" as outlined above and try to help them understand the dying process the patient's initial choice not to be resuscitated.
- For EMS - The Ohio DNR Comfort Care law is the only one you (EMS) can honor on your own. For any other types of DNR documents, you must contact Medical Control and describe your circumstances to a Physician. The Physician will decide if you should honor the DNR document, or begin resuscitation of the patient.
- Your living will document specifies in advance the kind of medical treatment you would want if and when you have a terminal illness or are in a permanently unconscious state and are no longer able to state your own wishes. It may not protect you from receiving CPR or other heroics. It only takes effect if you are in a certifiably terminal or permanently unconscious state, and emergency squad personnel cannot determine if you meet these conditions.
- A Health Care Power of Attorney is a document that names another person (usually a spouse, child, or other relative, and preferably someone who can understand your health status and make hard decisions on your behalf, if necessary) to make health care decisions for you whenever you are unable to do so yourself. It is not a DNR order, though it ordinarily would permit the person you appoint to agree to a DNR order for you, if you are unable to express your wishes at the time.

The General Power of Attorney usually does not address health care issues and ends if you become disabled. You may have given your general power of attorney to someone to manage your financial affairs while you were on vacation or in the hospital. If you want a general power of attorney to continue, even if you become disabled, the document must state that it is a durable, or continuing, power of attorney. A health care power of attorney is a durable power; it continues even after you become disabled and appoints someone to carry out your health care wishes.