



ESTATE PLANNING DOCUMENT SERIES

A LIVING WILL Covers Your Most Important Asset: You!

Your Fund's Legal Services Plan covers the preparation of living wills for you, your spouse, parent(s) and parent(s)-in law.

What is a Living Will?

A living will is a very important "advance directive". Unlike a last will and testament, which sets forth how you wish to distribute property and assets, such as real estate, investments and heirlooms after you pass away, a living will spells-out what kind of medical care you want or don't want, if you are unable to speak for yourself.

For example, you can specify whether you want cardiac and pulmonary resuscitation, respiratory support, artificial nutrition and/or hydration, maximum pain relief, etc.

What can go wrong?

Even though courts have consistently upheld the validity of living wills and their instructions, there can still be confusion and unintended issues for families when end-of-life decisions must be made.

The most frequent problem is that people do not know where to find your living will. When family members and health care providers do not have access to your living will, it effectively does not exist. This can be devastating when unexpected emergencies arise.

Important Steps to Take

Make sure the person designated to make medical decisions for you, known as your health care proxy, has a copy of your living will and understands your wishes. Even when you have a written living will, it is vital to review it with your health care proxy, family members and medical providers to ensure your instructions are clear and understood.

You should bring a copy of your living will with you when you undergo any elective surgery and share it with the medical professionals at the facility. It is not always enough to tell them that you have such a document.

You can also indicate where you keep your living will on your "Crisis Information Checklist" which is another important document you can get through your Fund's Legal Services Plan.

For more information or to speak with an attorney, call 516-466-6030 or e-mail info@mirkingordon.com.