

End of Life Planning

Whether one is looking towards the future because they want to understand and plan out what they are able, or a specific diagnosis or event has led to introspection of or outright knowledge regarding the possibility of their life ending, discussion with a physician can be an invaluable service and help family, friends, and the medical community assist you with your life goals.

Heart, liver, renal (kidney), and pulmonary (lung) conditions, as well as cancer diagnoses are common reasons discussions come about regarding end of life care. There are many others, and Dr. Ross is ready to review with you: what you value, what you would like to see accomplished, what you expect from the medical community, what is hospice care and who is it for and why, what about my family, and many other personal points. He is also able to discuss the legal jargon that may get thrown around that is important to be aware of: living wills, power of attorney, durable power of attorney, Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) and Do-Not-Intubate (DNI) orders, next-of-kin, hospital policy, and ethics boards in the hospital setting, to name a few.

Setting out personal desires and expectations for those concerned or likely to become involved before it becomes necessary is the best hope that it will happen. It is also the best way to head off what can become an unpleasant or even a very hurtful time for those needing or wanting to make decisions when you are not able to let them know what these are otherwise. The medical community will do all that it can for you, if those desires are set out in a way that allows them to carry them out; otherwise conflicting policies and well-meaning friends and family can result in some very negative memories, as well as you, the patient, can not have the care you intended.

Discussion of life goals and plans, when it comes to end of life care, does not need to be a morbid, dark, black discussion. It can be worthwhile, helpful, and even a comfort to have these points laid out in a set way. Let Dr. Ross know if you think it would be important to discuss these things.