



***Guide for
Local
Organizers***

**This statewide public awareness
campaign is sponsored by:**



**MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
OF THE STATE OF ALABAMA**



ALABAMA HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

**Additional support provided by:
Alabama Department of Public Health
Alabama Organ Center**

Overview

Three statewide associations have developed a program to deliver a valuable public service and give people the opportunity to meet and work with attorneys and health professionals in a non-adversarial setting. It's called LIFEPLAN 2001.

Who? The Medical Association of the State of Alabama, the Alabama State Bar and the Alabama Hospital Association, with support from the Alabama Public Health Department and the Alabama Organ Center, joined forces to launch LIFEPLAN 2001. Attorneys and health professionals like you are serving as volunteers to conduct the campaign at the local level.

What? LIFEPLAN 2001 is a statewide **public education** campaign to promote future health care planning, highlighting advance directives and organ donation. LIFEPLAN 2001 encourages families to discuss health care wishes now, rather than in a time of crisis.

When? Your public education campaign can reach adults of all ages during the month of October. Your LIFEPLAN 2001 activities may fit into already-existing local events.

Where? You can present LIFEPLAN 2001 to service clubs, church groups, student organization and senior centers in your community, just to name a few. Or you can host a LIFEPLAN 2001 meeting and invite the general public.

Why? Working together, legal and medical professionals will help the public prepare for future health care needs. LIFEPLAN 2001 will help ensure that people's wishes are accurately documented, shared with families and ultimately carried out.

How? All local people interested in hosting events are being provided this planning guide, which includes a sheet to order consumer guides for the local events. In addition, the statewide organizations will be promoting the October workshops throughout the state and providing a toll-free number for people to call to find an advance directive meeting in their area. The meetings will also be listed on the Alabama Department of Public Health's Web site – **www.alapubhealth.org**. The goal is to make it as easy as possible for you to plan and implement an advance directive meeting in your area.

LIFEPLAN 2001 is a unique opportunity for legal and medical professionals to demonstrate their cooperation by providing a valuable service to their communities. Overt promotion of the services of individual participants in the program may detract from this goal. Therefore, volunteers are asked to keep such promotion to a minimum.

Project Timeline

August

Pick sites for October meeting – If you're in a rural county, you might only need one or two meetings. However, if you're in a county with a large metropolitan area, like Birmingham, you may need to schedule several meetings. There is no magic number. Simply do what is appropriate for your community.

You may decide that, rather than hosting a public forum, you would like to take this program to groups that are already meeting, such as civic organizations, church groups, senior centers, hospital senior programs, etc. This is a great way to get the message out. If you decide to take this program to groups, you may need to alter this planning guide, however, most of it will still be helpful.

Set date for October meeting – Again, this is entirely up to you, the local planning committee. The only advice we would give is to try to have it during the month of October. In fact, the official LIFEPLAN 2001 week will be Oct. 1-6, by proclamation of the Governor, so you might try to get something close to this date. We are planning statewide publicity, so it will help if all meetings are confined to a one-month period.

Select time for meeting – You can have either day or night meetings. Just remember that we're trying to reach people who need to plan for their future, and some of these people may be working during the day, so a night or lunch meeting might be more convenient.

Think of others who need to be involved – While every effort needs a few key leaders, involving a broader group of community representatives (local media, AARP and other senior organizations, other health care providers such as Hospice, nursing home or home health, Area Council on Aging, etc.) will add to the meeting's success. You might invite them to attend the Aug. 24 satellite broadcast with you.

Assign people to the following tasks:

- Finding a location and handling facility arrangements
- Selecting speakers (You will probably need four people: someone to cover legal aspects, someone to cover medical aspects, someone to talk about organ donation, and a person to serve as a moderator for the panel)
- Handling food arrangements (if you decide to have any refreshments)
- Handling promotions/media for the event (see sample news release on page 8)

- Person to be in charge of poster distribution
- Someone to handle registration (You'll need a telephone number people can call or a place they can fax to for reservations. This registration count will need to be forwarded to the state so we can send you enough consumer guides for everyone attending)

Decide on next meeting date – There will be another satellite training conference on Aug. 24. However, much of the above work will need to be done by that time, so you will probably need to make arrangements for another meeting or a conference call.

Register for the LIFEPLAN 2001 satellite seminar on Aug. 24.

Complete Event Listing form as soon as information is available to fax to Rosemary Blackmon (334) 270-9527.

September

Place posters around the community to highlight your programs.

Order your free *Gift to Your Family* consumer guides from the Alabama State Bar. Deadline for orders is Sept. 21.

Assign an attorney and/or a health professional to submit a guest column on advance health care planning to your local newspapers to help generate interest among people in your community.

Send a news release to your local media.

Place a public service advertisement in your local newspaper to promote LIFEPLAN 2001. Your paper might be willing to donate space since LIFE PLAN 2001 is a public education effort. For your convenience, advertisements are included in this packet of information. You may choose to personalize the ads with the names of your county bar, county medical society and local hospital or clinic.

Promote your community events with posters, flyers, newspaper announcements and word-of-mouth.

October

**The first-ever statewide LIFEPLAN 2001 Campaign
Good luck!**

October Alabama LIFEPLAN 2001 Month

Oct. 1-6 Alabama LIFEPLAN 2001 Week

Suggested Activities

Kickoff event

Oct. 1-6 is Alabama LIFEPLAN 2001 week. Why not incorporate the LIFEPLAN 2001 theme into your community health events?

Organize an event to drum up enthusiasm for your local campaign. Hold a news conference with the president of the county bar, president of the county medical society, and/or the CEO of the local hospital or clinic. Promote the spirit of collaboration between the professions. Announce the campaign and unveil the free *Gift to Your Family* consumer guides.

You may choose to ask a “local figure” (mayor, police chief, news anchor, school superintendent, county board chair, judge) to serve as your “first customer.” Help the local figure complete an advance directive and have them sign it in a public place. Although the larger goal is to encourage families to discuss their health care wishes before completing the documents, having a local celebrity promote the process might inspire others to get started.

Be creative and keep it simple.

Public Education

Organize community presentations on LIFEPLAN 2001 topics such as the new advance directive and organ and tissue donation. Consider contacting service clubs and church groups in order to reach ready-made audiences for your presentations. Hand out free *Gift to Your Family* consumer guides to your attendees.

Hold free LIFEPLAN 2001 workshop in the community

Suggested Sites:

- Shopping malls
- Schools (technical colleges, universities)
- Churches
- Senior centers
- Public libraries, community centers
- Service clubs
- Local businesses, hospitals

Guest editorial for the newspaper

A practitioner might write an article about the need for advance directives based on the perspective of the following people:

- The injured 40-year-old bicyclist who is unconscious

- His mother
- His 20-year-old son
- The physician recommending a procedure
- The social worker
- The attorney

Explain what the advance directive does and does not do pursuant to the statutes.

Focus on the range of people who need advance directives:

- The adult who is in a catastrophic accident
- The adult who undergoes surgery and something unexpected happens or is found
- The elderly person whose cognitive abilities deteriorate slowly
- The adult who experiences a serious health crisis that renders him or her unable to make medical decisions

Highlight questions to discuss with the proposed health care agent:

- Discuss the range of catastrophes that can happen and the level of care that the person would want his/her representative to advocate
- Discuss how important independence or self-sufficiency is to the principal
- Discuss the role personal faith plays in a patient's life
- Discuss if the consumer would want to make provisions for organ or tissue donation
- Discuss sensitive dates in the family that might affect when life support would be discontinued, such as a child's birthday
- Discuss whether the health care proxy is capable of doing what the person is requesting
- Discuss whether the agent will be able to advocate in the face of strong opinions or beliefs by one or more of the health care providers or family members if it is contrary to the advance directive.

Order Form

Gift to Your Family Consumer Guide

A *Gift to Your Family* is a free consumer guide written by attorneys and health professionals in a comprehensive, easy-to-understand format to aid individuals in completing the advance care planning process. The guide includes the necessary legal documents and answers commonly asked questions.

The goal of the consumer guide is to share a valuable message – planning ahead for future medical decisions is truly a *Gift to Your Family*.

Name: _____

County: _____

Company: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Number of copies requested (best guess): _____

Please fax or mail your order to:

Susan Andres
Alabama State Bar
415 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
Fax: (334) 261-6310

Deadline: Sept. 21, 2001

By mid-August, consumer guides will be available to download on-line at:
www.alapubhealth.org.

**Events Listing
Fax Reply**

Use this sheet to list the site(s) for which you are responsible. Please complete an Events Listing for each event. Make copies as needed. This information will be posted on the Alabama Department of Public Health's Web site and will be provided to consumers when they call the toll-free number (800) 354-6154.

Fax this sheet to Rosemary Blackmon at (334) 270-9527.

Name: _____ **Title:** _____

County: _____ **Phone:** _____

Location (name of building, address): _____

Date & time of event: _____

Check one:

General public invited

Presentation to a specific group (please specify group) _____

Presentation to a specific group, but general public welcome to attend

Number to call to register (if applicable):

Number to call if people have questions about local event (if available):

Sample News Release

Contact:

Attorney

(Phone Number)

Health Care Professional

(Phone Number)

HEALTH, LEGAL PROFESSIONALS TEAM UP FOR LIFEPLAN 2001

Focus: Help Alabama Citizens Prepare For Future Health Needs

MONTGOMERY, Sept. 15, 2001 – Next month, three statewide organizations, with the help of attorneys, physicians and health care professionals across Alabama, are delivering a valuable public message – planning for future health needs is a gift to your family.

LIFEPLAN 2001 is a statewide public information campaign to encourage people to discuss health care wishes with their families and document them now, rather than during a crisis. The campaign also aims to improve the way legal and health care professionals provide such services by offering seminars statewide for attorneys, physicians and other health care providers involved in advance care planning. With Alabama's new advance directive form now in effect, it is important for citizens to be familiar with health care directive options.

A LIFEPLAN 2001 workshop will be presented on (insert date, time & place) by attorneys from the (local bar association), physicians from the (county medical society) and health care professionals from (name of hospital or clinic).

The campaign, to be held during the entire month of October is sponsored by the Alabama State Bar, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama and the Alabama Hospital Association, with support from the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama Organ Center, and reaches out to adults of all ages. Consumer guides will be distributed free-of-charge at local LIFEPLAN 2001 events and are available on-line at **www.alapubhealth.org**.

Oct. 1-5, 2001, has been proclaimed LIFEPLAN 2001 Week by the governor of Alabama and numerous LIFEPLAN 2001 events have been planned across the state. For more information, call 1-800-354-6154 or go to **www.alapubhealth.org**.

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Sample Program Outline

Advance Directives/Organ Donation

Overview of Program

- This program will include information on the following types of advance medical directives, the need for such directives, how they can be done and how they should be used:
 - ◆ Written advance medical directives (or living wills)
 - ◆ Appointment of a proxy or a medical durable power of attorney
- Information on both legal and medical aspects will be presented
- We will also discuss organ donation focusing on the tremendous need for organs and how someone can become a donor
- After each portion of the program, we will have time for questions from the audience

Advance Medical Directives:

What is an advance medical directive (also called a living will)?

- A document you create that tells what medical care you would want or not want if you become terminally ill or permanently unconscious and are unable to speak for yourself. There are three ways you can set up an advance directive: 1. Write out your wishes or complete the state's advance medical directive form (everyone has a copy); 2. Appoint a health care proxy; or 3. Appoint a medical durable power of attorney. We'll first talk about the written directive, and later discuss the other two options.
- To create an advance medical directive, you must be 19 years of age or older and mentally competent at the time you do the directive.
- For the advance medical directive to be used, you must be unable to communicate or participate in making health care decisions.

Why bother?

- If you don't make these medical decisions ahead of time, your health care workers and your family will be deciding what they think you would have wanted. You lose control.
- In extreme cases where family members cannot agree on what should be done, a court would have to intervene and make the decision.

Insert testimonial here (perhaps you have a health care worker who can talk about the anguish a family went through trying to guess what their loved one's wishes were)

What types of things does an advance medical directive cover?

- While you can specify other things, there is a model form in Alabama law that can be used to express your wishes. You all have a copy of this form, so let's look at it to see what types of things are typically included.

- *Have medical professional go over the following:*

Definitions of terminal illness & permanent unconsciousness:

- ◆ Terminal illness is when you have a condition that cannot be cured and you will likely die in the near future from this condition. Your doctor and another doctor have to agree on this diagnosis. (give examples)
- ◆ Permanently unconscious is when your doctor and another doctor agree that within a reasonable degree of medical certainty you can no longer think, feel anything, knowingly move, or be aware of being alive. They believe this condition will last indefinitely without hope for improvement and have watched you long enough to make that decision. (give examples)

Types of life-sustaining treatment

Need for artificial food and hydration and the decisions that must be made in this area.

Talk about comfort care.

Give examples of other types of things that could be listed in “Other” section.

Talk about need to discuss these things with your doctor so you and your doctor fully understand the decisions you are making.

Other types of advance directives

- Health Care Proxy – This is someone you ask to speak for you if you become too ill or injured for yourself. The reason for this is that the advance directive cannot possibly cover every situation that might occur. Therefore, you have someone to speak for you whom you trust and have talked with about your wishes.

Go over the health care proxy provisions in Alabama’s law (refer to form)

- Medical durable power of attorney – Many of you have heard of a durable power of attorney. This is someone you legally appoint to make decisions for you in the event you become too sick to make them on your own. It can mean handling your finances, managing your household, etc. A medical durable power of attorney is just an extension of the traditional durable power of attorney and is almost identical to the appointment of a proxy. You can either appoint a medical proxy or appoint a medical durable power of attorney and accomplish basically the same thing.

Do I need a lawyer to do an advance directive?

- If you already have an attorney, it would be wise to discuss these issues with him/her – Especially if you have created other documents. You want to be certain that all of your wishes can be fulfilled and that none of them present any conflicts with each other.
- However, you do not have to have an attorney help you complete an advance directive form to make it legal. You can take the form distributed today, complete it and have two witnesses sign it, and you will have a legal advance directive in this state.

What do I do with it once I get the form completed?

- Provide a copy to everyone who might possibly need one - your doctor(s), your family members, put one in your safety deposit box, etc. Be sure to have lengthy discussions with your family members about your wishes.
- Often, family members do not want to go along with what's expressed in an advance directive if they don't have any knowledge of it and are unsure that it truly represents what you want.
- In talking with your doctor, be sure that he/she is willing to abide by what you have written in your advance directive. By law, doctors and hospitals must follow your wishes or transfer you to a provider who will.
- Hospitals are required by law to ask all patients upon admission if they have an advance medical directive. If you have an advance medical directive, they will keep a copy on your chart. Be sure to make them aware of this every time you are admitted.
- Review it periodically to ensure that it still meets your needs. In fact, if you have an advance directive already, you might want to review it to be sure it complies with Alabama law. There were forms created prior to this last, newest form that are still legally valid. However, for advance directives made out prior to 1997, there could be some question of applicability.

Special Circumstance with Emergency Medical Services

- By law, if emergency medical service professionals (EMTs, firemedics, etc.), are called, then they must do everything possible to treat the injured or ill person. Even if the person has an advance directive, once the emergency contact is made, the EMS personnel must make every attempt to revive the person.
- The only exception to this rule is when the person is wearing a special bracelet. Patients can have their doctor place an order for a “do not resuscitate” bracelet. Such a bracelet alerts the EMS personnel to the special situation and allows them to legally respect the wishes of the patient.

Can I change my mind?

- After creating an advance directive, you can change your mind about it at any point (as long as you are mentally competent). You can either tear up your advance medical directive form and write a new one, or you can tear it up and tell someone at least 19 years of age of your wishes and asking him or her to write them down.

Questions?

Points to cover regarding organ donation

This outline was provided by the Alabama Organ Center. However, in most cases you will probably want to secure a speaker knowledgeable in this area. The Organ Center has staff members, as well as recipients, who would be happy to speak on this subject at your meeting. To obtain a speaker, contact Kelly Skelton, Manager of Corporate and Community Affairs, at (800) 252-3677 or (205) 731-9200.

- I. *What can be donated?*
 - A. *Organs*
 - B. *Tissues*

- II. *The need*
 - A. *In the nation*
 - B. *In Alabama*

- III. *Common myths*
 - A. *Appearance*
 - B. *Cost*
 - C. *Religious issues*
 - D. *Sharing system fairness*
 - E. *Quality of medical care after signing a donor card – donation only an option after all life-saving efforts have failed*

- IV. *What should you do?*
 - A. *Get information – see brochures*
 - B. *Sign a donor card and/or indicate your wishes on your license*
 - C. *Tell your family! Personal testimonial below.*

Written by a Donor Mom

The things I remember most about my son were his kindness, his generosity, and how much he loved doing for others. Last year when Matt received his driver's license, we had a conversation that I never expected. Matt told me if anything ever happened to him he wanted to be an organ donor. I asked him if he was sure this was what he wanted. He looked me straight in the eyes with a very serious expression on his face and said, "Mom, if I have anything that someone else could use, then I would want them to have it." He grinned and winked at me and said, "Mom, I wouldn't need it anymore anyway!" I told him I was sure that I would never be faced with this but I promised him I would carry out his wishes. On June 27, 1998 we were faced with this decision. In all honesty I don't know what we would have decided if it had not been for that conversation. You see it was Matt's decision to be an organ donor. Matt was known to everyone by his smile. I think Matt is smiling today from heaven knowing that he was able to help others.

Sample Ad Slicks

**Your life.
Your dignity.
Your decisions.**

Call 1-800-354-6154
for information on local
advance planning
meetings



Sponsored by the Alabama State Bar, the
Medical Association of the State of Alabama
and the Alabama Hospital Association, with
support from the Alabama Department of
Public Health and the Alabama Organ Center.

**If you lose the ability to make
health care decisions, who decides for you?**

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**Doctor. Lawyer. Family.
They help, but it's
your decision.**

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and the Alabama Hospital Association, with support from the Alabama Department of
Public Health and the Alabama Organ Center.

To make these more effective, work with your local newspaper to redesign ads to include information about your local event(s). Feel free to change these ads to suit your local needs (e.g., replace the toll-free number with your local number). The goal is to build excitement about LIFEPLAN 2001 in your community.



**Additional support provided by the Alabama Department of Public Health and
the Alabama Organ Center**