

Withholding and Withdrawing Life-Sustaining Treatments

Policy:

Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital Family of Services is dedicated to the provision of healing, restorative and palliative care to people who are sick and to the care of those who are suffering or dying. Both human and technological resources are offered. To restore health and support life are among the organization's principal goals. This means that every appropriate effort is made to cure the sick and rehabilitate the injured. For persons with a terminal illness, we will provide for their comfort, symptom control and emotional, social and spiritual support rather than life-sustaining treatments.

Definitions:

- A. **Life-sustaining treatment** is any medical intervention that uses mechanical or other artificial means, including artificially provided nutrition or hydration, to sustain, restore or replace a vital function which, when applied to a qualified patient, would serve only to prolong the process of dying. Life-sustaining treatment may include but is not limited to the following: cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), transfer to the Intensive Care Unit, artificially administered nutrition and hydration.
- B. **Withdrawing life-sustaining treatment** is termination of treatment already in progress.
- C. **Withholding life-sustaining treatment** means not initiating life-sustaining treatment. It is consistent with the written "Do Not Resuscitate" order.
- D. **Terminal condition** means an incurable and irreversible condition caused by disease, injury or illness that within reasonable medical judgment will cause death within a reasonable period of time in accordance with accepted medical standards, and where the application of life-sustaining treatment serves only to prolong the process of dying.
- E. **Do Not Resuscitate** means basic and advanced life support is withheld; automatic initiation of cardiopulmonary resuscitation is suspended.