

DOCTORS' CHECKLIST ON ADVANCE MEDICAL DIRECTIVE PROCEDURES

When a patient comes to you to make an AMD:

- ▶ Check that he is at least 21 years old (from his NRIC or medical records).
- ▶ Make sure he is of sound mind by checking that he -
 - (a) understands the nature and implications of the directives;
 - (b) is oriented to time and space; and
 - (c) is able to name himself and his immediate family members.
- ▶ Explain to him the legal and medical implications of an AMD (you may charge the patient a "consultation" fee according to the amount of time spent). Make sure that the patient understands the aim of the AMD is to avoid prolonging the dying process and suffering, and not so much to save medical expenses. This will also save the family members from making a very difficult decision at a time when they are under tremendous emotional pressure.
- ▶ Encourage the patient to discuss the decision to make an AMD with his family members. If the patient's family members are accompanying the patient, get the patient's permission and let them be involve in the discussion (but they cannot act as witnesses).
- ▶ Emphasise that the decision is completely voluntary and no adverse effects with regard to receiving medical treatment will occur if one does not make an AMD.
- ▶ Remind the patient that the AMD can be revoked at any time if he changes his mind.
- ▶ Guide the patient to fill in **FORM 1** and sign together with the second witness (any person who is at least 21 years old, including your nurse). You may offer to send in the form to the Registry of Advance Medical Directives for the patient.
- ▶ Never divulge the information that the patient has made an AMD to others except under conditions allowed by the AMD Act.

When your patient tells you that he wants to revoke his AMD:

- ▶ Record the date, time and place of the revocation in **FORM 3** (you may use other sheets of paper if *Form 3* is not available).

No person shall participate in any procedures related to the making or effecting of an AMD if he has any vested interests in the patient's death
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- ▶ Let your patient sign the form (if practicable).
- ▶ Then you sign as the witness.
- ▶ Send in the form to the Registry for your patient, especially when your patient is too ill at that time to do it himself.

When your patient, in your judgement, is suffering from a terminal illness, requires extraordinary life-sustaining treatment, and is unconscious or incapable of expressing rational judgement:

- ▶ Complete **FORM 5** to certify the terminal illness and fax it (followed by mailing the original copy) to the Registrar to request for a search of the AMD Register.
- ▶ The Registrar will inform you of the result of the search in **FORM 6** by fax.

When the Registrar confirms that your patient has a valid AMD registered under the AMD Act 1996:

- ▶ Get the opinions of two other doctors in **FORM 7** as to whether they agree that the patient is terminally ill. It is your responsibility to make the arrangement.
- ▶ Among the 3 of you (the 2 other doctors and yourself), at least 2 must be specialists.
("Specialist" is a doctor who has completed advanced speciality training or the equivalent. In public hospitals, this is generally equivalent to a Senior Registrar).
- ▶ The specialists should be practising in a discipline related to the patient's illness.
- ▶ If both of the 2 other doctors agree that the patient is terminally ill, you can effect the patient's AMD after completing the **certificate** attached to **FORM 7**. If the 2 other doctors are not in unanimous agreement that the patient is terminally ill, you should carefully re-evaluate your patient's condition. If you still believe that the patient is terminally ill, you should refer the case back to the Registrar so that a decision will be made by a committee of three specialists appointed by the Director of Medical Services.

- ▶ Return the entire **FORM 7** and the **certificate** to the Registrar.
- ▶ If the committee unanimously agrees that the patient is terminally ill, you can effect the patient's AMD after completing the **certificate** attached to **FORM 9**. If the committee does not agree unanimously that the patient is terminally ill, the patient's AMD must not be effected.
- ▶ Return the entire **FORM 9** and the certificate to the Registrar.
- ▶ Inform the patient's family members and provide the necessary counselling when you are giving effect to the patient's AMD. Let them know what is happening and what you are going to do. Prepare them emotionally and try your best to help them to accept the fact. There may be a lot of different opinions at this point of time among the family members. Be firm to implement the patient's will (his AMD) and explain to them that this is the patient's wish as well as his right.
- ▶ Upon the patient's death, obtain a duplicate copy of the patient's **certificate of cause of death** issued by the doctor or the coroner and forward it to the Registrar.

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