

## DO NOT RESUSCITATE (DNR) ORDER VERSUS LIVING WILL

A DNR order is not the same as a Living Will. What are these documents, and when are they necessary?

### **What Is a DNR order?**

A DNR order directs emergency medical personnel to withhold or withdraw life-saving measures (such as CPR) from a person in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest. Florida has an approved DNR order form available for download on their site: <http://www.floridahealth.gov/index.html>.

### **When Is a DNR order Necessary?**

A DNR order is not necessary unless the circumstances call for it. For example, if a person has experienced 5 heart attacks and does not wish to be revived if they suffer a 6<sup>th</sup> one; or if someone is suffering from a terminal condition and does not wish to be placed on life support, he/she would sign a DNR order. When making the decision whether a DNR order is appropriate; it is important to seek guidance from a physician as well legal counsel.

### **What Is a Living Will?**

A Living Will allows a person to state whether he/she wishes to be kept alive by artificial means if in an end-stage condition, or persistent vegetative state. In a Living Will an agent is named and given authority to ensure the person's wishes are followed. A Living Will only applies if the person has already been placed on life support and gives the agent the ability to remove such support. Without a living will, the laws in your state will determine who will make those decisions.

### **When Do You Need a Living Will?**

Unexpected events, like a car accident, can trigger the need for a Living Will. Therefore, a Living Will is an important part of your estate plan and should be put in place before the need arises.