

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the EMS Comfort Care Program?

The EMS Comfort Care Program is the name of the program authorized by DC Law 13-224 that allows terminally ill patients to indicate their preferences regarding resuscitative efforts related to a specified medical or terminal condition.

How does one qualify for the EMS Comfort Care program?

In order to qualify, one must be medically diagnosed with a specific medical or terminal illness. The Order becomes effective once the physician has signed the EMS Comfort Care Order and has placed the temporary plastic bracelet on the patient. An attorney's signature is not required.

I already have a Living Will and an Advanced Directive, why do I need an EMS Comfort Care Order?

The EMS Comfort Care Order authorizes EMS personnel to follow your stated wishes regarding resuscitation efforts while you are out of the hospital setting. Documents such as the Living Will or Advanced Directives are only applicable in the hospital setting and apply only to hospital staff. It does not apply to Emergency Medical Service personnel.

How does one obtain this document?

The EMS Comfort Care Orders are only available through one's attending physician, hospitals or nursing homes.



"Thanks for allowing her to leave this world with dignity.

You honored her final wishes."

Author Unknown

What if my physician signs the EMS Comfort Care Order & I change my mind?

The EMS Comfort Care Order may be revoked at any time by removing, cutting or destroying the EMS Comfort Care bracelet or by directing another person to do so. You can also communicate directly to EMS personnel the intent to revoke the EMS Comfort Care Order.

What costs are associated with enrolling in the EMS Comfort Care Program?

The EMS Comfort Care Order and the accompanying temporary plastic bracelet are provided free of charge to the individual by the Department of Health, Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration. There is a modest fee for the permanent metal bracelet that must be obtained directly from the Oneida Nameplate Company.

If my physician is not aware of the EMS Comfort Care Program how can I request information?

Contact HEPRA from 8:15am to 4:45pm Monday through Friday at 202-671-4222. Provide the following: your name, your physician's name and business address. Information will be mailed to your physician.



Purpose

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Comfort Care Order (CCO) allows terminally ill patients of the District of Columbia to express their wishes regarding end of life resuscitation issues in the pre/post-hospital setting. The process requires that the physician certify and sign that the patient (adult or child) has a specific medical or terminal condition. The patient, the patient's authorized decision maker or the patient's surrogate, must also consent and sign the order. The physician then places the Comfort Care bracelet on the patient. When EMS personnel respond to calls for either cardiac or respiratory arrest related to the specific medical or terminal condition of a Comfort Care patient, they would recognize and honor the Comfort Care bracelet by not resuscitating the patient, unless the Order has been revoked. The Order may be revoked at any time by communicating the intent to revoke the order or by destroying or defacing the Comfort Care bracelet.

Authority

DC Law 13-224 authorizes and establishes procedures and protocol for do not resuscitate orders in the District of Columbia. The program will be managed by the Government of the District of Columbia, Department of Health (DOH), Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration (HEPRA). This law also provides for the administration of palliative care to those who have executed a valid EMS Comfort Care Order.



For additional information you may contact your physician or DC Department of Health Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Administration (HEPRA)

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**District of Columbia
Department of Health**

**Emergency
Medical Services**



Comfort Care Program

