



# Degree of Intervention

*Resident & Family  
Resource Handbook*



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# *The Choice is Yours...*

## **Introduction**

Everybody has the right to decide what happens to his or her own body. This includes the right to accept or refuse any medical treatment offered by a nurse or doctor. Decisions about medical care must be based on a realistic assessment of the risks and benefits of each treatment, but must also take into account your own values concerning quality of life.

Some people will choose to prolong their lives even if it means being on a life-support machine. Other people will choose to limit medical treatment so they can focus on being comfortable and remain in familiar surroundings.

The Degree of Intervention form is a way of giving Inglewood's care team and your Doctor instructions about what kind of medical treatment you would want if you were to become so sick you could not speak for yourself. This booklet discusses the general medical treatment decisions that must be made when sickness occurs. Read it carefully. Inglewood's Nurse, Social Worker or Director of Care are available to answer any questions you may have after reading this booklet.

When you have decided which level of medical treatment best suits you, inform your Doctor and this decision will be recorded on your chart. This decision can be changed *at any time* and is reviewed on a regular basis.

## **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)**

Choosing a Degree of Intervention involves two decisions. One decision you need to make is whether you would want to be given CPR if your heart unexpectedly stops beating and someone saw you collapse. CPR involves massaging the heart by pushing on the breastbone and breathing artificially by mouth-to-mouth until an attempt can be made to restart the heart with drugs or electric shock.

It is important to realize that CPR is a very invasive treatment. Although some residents of Residential Care Facilities who undergo CPR survive initially, only a small percentage actually leave hospital. Ask your Doctor how successful CPR is likely to be in your situation. If you have a serious ongoing health problem (e.g. Advanced heart, lung or kidney disease), your Doctor may advise you that CPR is not recommended because it would offer little hope of success.

### **Degrees of Intervention**

The next decision you need to make is what kind of medical treatment you would want for yourself if you were to become ill and unable to discuss your treatment with your Doctor. There are four basic levels of medical treatment given:

#### **Degree One: Supportive Care**

This involves medical and nursing care focused solely on keeping you comfortable. Medication is given for pain or fever, oral fluids and oxygen are administered as needed. Supportive Care is usually requested by individuals who are in the last stages of an incurable disease (e.g. heart disease, dementia, cancer) and are close to death. Residents requesting Supportive Care will stay at Inglewood, close to friends and cared for by staff they know well. They are only transferred to hospital in cases of lacerations, hip fractures, or if it was decided that they cannot be safely cared for at Inglewood. CPR would not be attempted with Supportive Care.

## **Degree Two A: Therapeutic Measures in Long Term Care**

Therapeutic Measures involve any treatment that can be given at a Residential Care facility, but does not include transfer to hospital if that treatment is not working. For example, if you developed pneumonia, antibiotics would be given by mouth. If those antibiotics were not strong enough to fight the infection, you would not be sent to hospital to receive intravenous antibiotics; you would instead be kept comfortable at the nursing home.

Those who choose Degree Two A are usually choosing quality (i.e. staying in a familiar environment amongst friends) over length of remaining life. Families may request Degree Two A treatment for their relative who has advanced dementia, is frightened of hospitals, or is not able to cooperate with basic tests or treatment.

As with Supportive Care, residents would only be transferred to hospital if staff were unable to keep them safe and comfortable. CPR is not attempted with Degree Two A.

## **Degree Two B: Therapeutic Measures in Acute Care**

Therapeutic Measures in Acute Care involve transfer to hospital if your illness is not responding to the treatment you are receiving at Inglewood. For example, if you developed pneumonia and antibiotics by mouth are not working, you would be sent to hospital to receive intravenous antibiotics. You would not be admitted to Intensive Care. CPR is not attempted with Degree Two B.

### **Degree Three: Maximum Therapeutic Effort**

Maximum medical treatment involves transfer to hospital and admission to the Intensive Care Unit if a very serious illness occurs. Intensive Care Units are highly specialized places where patients receive the most complex and technologically advanced treatments including CPR and life-support machines. Treatments available in the Intensive Care Unit are often life saving for younger individuals who have had major trauma or a single serious illness. However, they are often less successful with elderly patients who have several serious health problems occurring at once. As treatment in the Intensive Care Unit is traumatic you may decide against requesting maximum medical treatment.

### **Degree Four: The resident or their representative may word their own request**

This option provides residents and their families or representatives with the opportunity to word their own request. This option may be suitable for a resident whose health is quite stable and who would like each medical situation to be assessed prior to making a decision.

## Representation Agreements and Health Care Consent Act

New legislation in British Columbia allows you to make what some people think of as a “Living Will” or “Advanced Directive”. This document is called a Representation Agreement. If you are no longer able to make decisions for yourself for any reason, the Representation Agreement instructs your family and caregivers as to what to do when decisions must be made for you. This can be any kind of decision – financial, social, religious, health-care and end of life decisions such as those described in the “Degree of Intervention” form. The Representation Agreement allows you to specify who can allow you to specify who can make decisions for you and under which circumstances. It is the document that *legally* has the power to insure that your wishes are carried out. A Representation Agreement is much broader than the Degree of Intervention form, and much more detailed.

British Columbia has also passed the Health Care Consent Act. This Act says that you are able to make decisions for yourself until you are no longer capable and describes how capability is assessed. It specifies who can make health care decisions for you if you are unable to give consent. It also specifies in what order family members have priority to make decisions – first is a spouse or significant other, then an adult child, then a parent, then a sibling. Any decisions made by someone other than yourself must be made according to how you would have made them.

The Degree of Intervention is not a Representation Agreement, but if it is signed when you are capable of making the kind of decisions which the level of intervention addresses, then your Residential Care facility is obliged to follow your instructions. If a relative signs it, then it must be signed according to your wishes as you have expressed them in the past. If you have made a Representation Agreement, the Degree of Intervention is essentially a summary of the decisions you have made regarding care in a nursing home or transport to hospital.

INGLEWOOD CARE CENTRE

**DEGREE OF INTERVENTION**

The Degree of Intervention in the event of a sudden collapse or terminal illness for

\_\_\_\_\_ shall be Degree \_\_\_\_\_  
 Resident's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Physician's Signature                      Resident or Designate's Signature                      Date

Reviewed and Reaffirmed:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Physician's Signature                      Resident or Designate's Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Physician's Signature                      Resident or Designate's Signature                      Date

<p><b>DEGREE ONE: Supportive Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comfort Measures</li> <li>• Pain Relief</li> <li>• Control of Fever</li> <li>• Oral Fluids, Oxygen</li> <li>• Do Not Transfer to Acute Care (Exceptions include hip fractures or lacerations)</li> <li>• No Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation</li> </ul>	<p><b>DEGREE TWO A: Therapeutic Measures in LTC</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comfort Measures</li> <li>• Pain Relief</li> <li>• Control of Fever</li> <li>• Oral Fluids, Oxygen</li> <li>• Do Not Transfer to Acute Care (Exceptions include hip fractures or lacerations)</li> <li>• Medication as Indicated (e.g., antibiotics)</li> <li>• No Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation</li> </ul>
<p><b>DEGREE TWO B: Therapeutic Measures in Acute Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer to Acute Care/Emergency for Assessment</li> <li>• Excludes Intensive Care</li> <li>• No Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation</li> </ul>	<p><b>DEGREE THREE: Maximum Therapeutic Effort</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer to Acute Care</li> <li>• Intensive Care as Indicated</li> <li>• Cardio-pulmonary Resuscitation</li> </ul>

**DEGREE FOUR: The Resident/Designate or Physician may outline his/her own request.**

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## **In Closing**

We all value the right to make decisions for ourselves, especially when it comes to sensitive matters like what type of health care we wish to receive. We do hope that this booklet has provided you with a bit more information about what options are available in a care facility.

If you would like more information, please contact Inglewood's Social Worker or Director of Care. More information about the Representation Agreement or Health Care Consent Act can be obtained at the Representation Agreement Resource Centre at 604-408-7414. Their website is <http://www.rarc.ca>.