

Why Read This Guide?

A Personal Story:

I am an African American woman.

When one of my older relatives was rushed to the hospital with a serious illness, she wasn't ready to deal with the business of her healthcare issues. Her memory had started to fade, and she was calling us other people's names without knowing it. Since 1991, the federal Patient Self Determination Act has required all healthcare providers to ask if you have an "advance directive," and, if you don't, they must give you the choice to complete one.



When the nurse tried to explain about the advance directive, my relative got VERY upset. She shouted, "What y'all tryin' to do with me? Ain't nobody gonna put me in a nursing home!" Her concern and words echoed in my mind and gave me the reason to write this end-of-life booklet. After she calmed down, she agreed to give one of her children "Durable Power of Attorney" for her healthcare and financial decisions. She understood that the day might come when she would not be able to do things for herself.

I started asking other African Americans, including my parents, about end-of-life issues. I found out that most of them did not understand what end-of-life care was all about. So I wrote this guide—for African Americans who might be like my relatives. This booklet gives African Americans of any age helpful information to make the best decisions BEFORE they are unable to communicate what they want for themselves.

Gloria Thomas Anderson