



Your life. Your death. Your choice.

POSITION STATEMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS

To: Users of the Five Wishes Advance Directive
From: End of Life Washington
Date: October 7, 2015
Re: Problematic Language Included in Wish 2

It is the position of End of Life Washington that the Five Wishes Advance Directive contains a statement that could cause significant problems when there is disagreement among family members; between family members and the patients' health care agent; or between family or health care agent and medical providers regarding the continuation of life-sustaining treatment.

Under Wish 2, there is a statement under "What you should keep in mind as my caregiver" that states: "*I do not want anything done or omitted by my doctors or nurses with the intention of taking my life.*"

Then the form goes on to list medical interventions that keep a person alive and allows you to check the box, "I do not want life-support treatment." But even if you check this box, a hospital, doctor or dissenting family member could object that stopping life support would "intend" death, and the form you signed expressly prohibits that. Thus it creates internal conflict within the document.

Additionally, the statement that "*I do not want anything done or omitted by my doctors or nurses with the intention of taking my life.*" is not consistent with Washington State law. [RCW 70.122.070](#) states explicitly that the withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining procedures from terminal or permanently unconscious patients who have made advance directives does not constitute a suicide or homicide.

The Five Wishes form itself instructs you to cross out portions you don't agree with. End of Life Washington strongly recommends that users of Five Wishes cross out and initial (and also date, if you are revising a previously-made document) the "I do not want anything done...with the intention of taking my life" statement under Wish 2.

Alternatively, End of Life Washington has a free, comprehensive advance directive packet available (there is usually a charge for Five Wishes) that incorporates several improvements over most advance directives available, including Five Wishes. It can be downloaded from www.EndofLifeWA.org, or requested from our office by phone (206.256.1636, 877.222-2816 toll-free) or email, info@EndofLifeWA.org. Both regular and large print versions are available.