Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is an emergency medical procedure that can be tried for a patient whose heart has stopped. It is also used for patients who have stopped breathing. It involves squeezing the heart between the breastbone and the spine, putting a tube into the windpipe to assist with breathing, and electrical shock to the heart. It can be a lifesaving measure for a healthy adult who has an unexpected heart stoppage from a heart attack or drug reaction. It rarely works in patients with advanced cancer or chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions. If you want to be kept comfortable and allowed a natural death without CPR or machines, you can ask your doctor or healthcare provider to write a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order for you. In West Virginia, the DNR order for persons outside of a hospital is issued on an orange card (right).

Many people think CPR is always successful because of the way it has been shown on television or in the movies. The more health problems someone has, the less likely it is that CPR will bring someone back to their prior health and abilities. When CPR is done in hospitalized patients, it is successful overall in only about 15% of patients. Only about 5% of patients or 5 of 100 who have chronic medical problems such as heart failure will leave the hospital alive after CPR.

The WV Legislature passed the WV Do Not Resuscitate Act to protect the rights of persons to control whether or not they receive CPR. CPR may cause unwanted pain and suffering. Patients who live through CPR almost always spend time on a breathing machine in an intensive care unit. At the end of life, most West Virginians say they would not want to be kept alive on machines.

For questions about this form or anything else concerning advance directives or POST forms call:

877-209-8086
www.wvendoflife.org
DNR Card (Do Not Resuscitate)

CPR Is Performed By:

- Putting the patient flat on his/her back on a firm surface.
- Opening the person’s mouth and airway by lifting the chin forward.
- Checking whether the person is breathing by listening for breath sounds and looking for the chest to move.
- Using a face mask or medical equipment with oxygen in an attempt to get air into the patient’s lungs.
- Starting chest compressions if there is no pulse. They may use a machine to do chest compressions.

Also:

- The Fire Department or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) responds to the 911 call and takes over when they arrive.
  - Machines are often used to perform chest compressions.
  - Electric shock may be used in trying to restart the heart.
- The patient’s family is notified.
- If the patient can be stabilized, transportation to the nearest hospital is done by ambulance.

Machines that may be used during CPR:

- **Automatic External Defibrillator (AED):** reads the heart rhythm and tells rescuers how to treat the person. It does this in a loud computerized voice. It can deliver electric shocks to try to restart the heart.

- **Cardiac monitor:** reads the heart rhythm only. This puts out a paper strip that can be read by a health care provider.

- **Cardiac defibrillator:** delivers an electric shock to try to restart the heart.

- The Fire Department or EMS may bring in an external device that supports CPR. This machine does the chest compressions.

*Hard Choices for Loving People* is a book that clarifies issues surrounding end-of-life decisions in an easy-to-read format. The book covers the most common medical treatment decisions. It is available for purchase at [www.hankdunn.com](http://www.hankdunn.com)

FAX your DNR Card to the WV e-Directive Registry so that your wishes will be known and available when needed.

WV e-Directive Registry FAX
844-616-1415

West Virginia Center for End-of-Life Care
1195 Health Sciences North Morgantown, WV 26506-9022

www.wvendoflife.org