**The Patient Self-Determination Act**

**Information Sheet**

*It is your right to accept or refuse medical treatment.* Your doctor must clearly explain the advantages and risks of any procedure, tests or treatments. Based on this information, you, the patient must give your permission for such care. You have the right to refuse any treatments. This process is called *informed consent.*

When you cannot tell us your wishes, we assume you want treatment to continue. If there are times where you would not want treatment to continue, it is important for you to let your health care providers know what those times are.

**An Advance Directive protects your right to make decisions about your care if you ever become unable to choose or tell us your wishes due to an accident or an illness.** By using **Advance Directives** you can tell your loved ones, your doctor, your hospital, how you would like to be cared for if you cannot tell them yourself. To prepare an Advance Directive, you must be 18 years of age and have the ability to give informed consent.

In Maine there are two legal documents that you may use to communicate your wishes: the **Living Will** and the **Health Care Power of Attorney.**

**Advance Directives can be changed or revoked** as you make new decisions about your health care. Also each document will be carefully reviewed before your health care providers act upon the Directive.

**We do not require you to have, or prohibit you from having, an Advance Directive. You will be cared for in either case.**

CMHC has written policies and procedures that tell how these two documents will be used at the Medical Center. The type of care you receive will be determined by your Advance Directive only if you are unable to make your own decisions. At all other times, you will continue to make decisions for yourself. In the unlikely event that your doctor or the hospital is unwilling to carry out your Advance Directive, every effort will be made to transfer your care to another doctor or hospital that is willing to comply.

**The decision to prepare an Advance Directive should be made after careful thought and discussion with those important to you.** We at CMHC encourage your active involvement in your medical care. We urge you to talk about these matters with your loved ones, your doctor and others, who might include your lawyer or your clergy.

*Further information about these documents is available upon request from members of your health care treatment team.*