

# Mourning Ventures of Maine

## Medical Terms and Treatment Decisions

A few things you need to know about common end-of-life medical decisions.

Terminology and medical options when planning for advance medical care can be quite confusing. The following are some of the terms that may appear in conversations and documents. You don't need to be an expert as you explore advance planning for yourself or with someone else—but it helps to know what these terms mean. You can also further discuss any of these with your medical provider.

### ♥ Life-Sustaining Treatment (General Term)

- Any treatment that prolongs life when the body can't function on its own, including CPR, ventilators, dialysis, tube feeding, or certain medications

### ♥ CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation)

- An emergency procedure that tries to restart the heart using chest compressions, electric shocks, or medication
- May be less effective for frail or seriously ill people

### ● DNR (Do Not Resuscitate)

- A medical order stating that CPR should not be performed if the heart stops

### ✋ Ventilator (Breathing Machine)

- A machine involving a tube down the throat, through the nose, or a tracheotomy to help a person breathe if they cannot on their own

### ⊘ DNI (Do Not Intubate)

- A medical order stating that a person does not want a breathing tube (mechanical ventilation) if they can no longer breathe on their own

### ☹ Artificial Nutrition & Hydration

- Provides food and fluids either short- or long-term, through a tube if a person cannot eat or drink

### 💊 Antibiotics and Other Medications

- Used to treat infections & manage symptoms
- People can choose whether they want aggressive treatment for infections (e.g., IV antibiotics) or only comfort-focused care

### 🩺 Dialysis

- A treatment to remove waste and fluid from the blood when the kidneys are not working

### 🛖 Persistent Vegetative State

- A condition where a person is awake but unaware, with no signs of purposeful brain activity
- Often irreversible

### 📄 POLST (Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment)

- A medical order for people with advanced illness or frailty that informs healthcare providers which treatments you do or don't want, across all care settings

### 📌 Note:

*These definitions are for general education only and may vary by state. For medical guidance, consult your healthcare provider.*

