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**Attorneys & Counselors at Law**

By: S. Michele Blanchard, B.S., B.C.L., JD, LL.M. and  
Jake Airey B.A., B.C.L., JD.

**TOPIC: LIVING WILLS**  
**DO I NEED A LIVING WILL?**

**HOW DO I KNOW WHICH PROCEDURE I WANT TO PROLONG MY LIFE?**

It is virtually impossible to specify every possible procedure under every circumstance. However, you and your attorney can draft language that best declares your wishes regarding life support. In making this decision, it is important to think about your personal views on death and how life support would affect the dying process.

It is important to discuss your living will with your family members. It is also important to share your views on prolonged medical treatment.

**DO I NEED A LIVING WILL?**

Americans are living longer and healthier lives thanks to medical innovations. However, in some cases, medical machines are being used to keep an individual alive long after the mind and body have ceased to function naturally.

The Louisiana legislature has enacted R.S. 40:1299.58.3 that authorizes an individual to refuse medical treatment and even life-sustaining treatment. The law authorizes an individual to declare his/her wishes regarding life-sustaining treatment.

**WHAT IS A LIVING WILL?**

Under Louisiana Law, a living will is a written document that instructs your family members and physician on the type of care you wish to receive. Specifically, a Living Will is a Declaration that indicates whether or not you consider life-prolonging medical procedures to include nutrition and hydration.

**WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A LIVING WILL?**

There are several benefits. The most important benefit of the living will is that it relieves family members from the burden of making and agonizing over life or death decision regarding prolonged medical treatment. The Living Will also stops your physician or the courts from interfering with your decisions regarding life-sustaining medical treatment.

**DO I NEED AN ATTORNEY TO PREPARE MY LIVING WILL?**

Living Wills are an evolving area of law and state statutes are subject to change. To be assured that your living will conforms to the most recent legislation, it is advisable to seek legal counsel. In addition, an attorney will aid you in expressing your wishes that a standard form may fail to address.

**IN SUMMARY**

It is your right to make your own health care decisions-including end-of-life decisions. Your right may be forfeited unless you take steps to declare your wishes.

This brochure is provided as a public service by Airey & Blanchard, L.C. Our firm is dedicated to aiding families in meeting their estate planning objective. Airey & Blanchard, L.C. offers families a free consultation to explore the importance of estate planning to their family.

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**985-641-4010**