

## Out-of-Hospital/EMS DNR Order

*Lance writes . . .*

The patient and family have the responsibility to complete the health care power of attorney and the living will. The physician then has the responsibility for writing orders that protect the patient from unwanted interventions. The “Do Not Resuscitate” (DNR) order written in the hospital chart tells the hospital staff that no resuscitative measures (CPR, breathing tubes, electrical shocks) are to be administered as the patient dies naturally.

However, if the patient leaves the hospital with an end-of-life plan, a second form of Do Not Resuscitate order must be signed by the physician to prevent emergency medical service (EMS) personnel from performing those unwanted interventions if the patient stops breathing or the heart stops pumping during transport to or from the home or institution. This order is a state-specific document that goes by a variety of names, such as the EMS DNR, the Bedside DNR, and the Out-of-Hospital DNR. Even though it seems redundant and even annoying to add another document to a complex care plan, this document is crucial. Although the physician must sign it, I would advise the patient and family to be sure to ask about it.

Because each state has a different policy regarding out-of-hospital resuscitation by EMS, the details are beyond the scope of this book. Many doctors are not fully aware of this document either and may not have them in the office. However, in order to help you with this additional step we have done research on each state’s policy. Initial information is provided at [www.atthecloseofday.com](http://www.atthecloseofday.com) under “Out-of-Hospital DNR by State.” We were amazed by the differences between states and the complexity of some of the policies, but we tried to give you some details and some contact information. We will work to keep the site updated for your convenience.