

# HEALTHY VISION 2025



## Value Patient Autonomy

Perhaps no decision we make is more personal, difficult, or profound as choosing how we wish to spend our final months, weeks, or days. Physicians encourage all Texans to think this through carefully – and discuss their decisions with family and loved ones – long before they enter a hospital or nursing home with a terminal illness.

Texas physicians abide by the principle, “First, do no harm.” For this reason, the Texas Medical Association supports the Texas Advance Directives Act as signed into law by then-Gov. George W. Bush. Its aim is to allow patients to make their preferences known before they need care, and to protect patients from unnecessary discomfort, pain, and suffering due to excessive medical intervention in the dying process.

TMA is determined to defend the Advance Directives Act, whose language was painstakingly crafted to protect patient autonomy. Stakeholder groups – all of whom are involved in the ongoing debate – unanimously supported passage of that law.

*(continued)*



Physicians Caring for Texans

# WE SUPPORT

- **HB 3332 by Franks**, which prevents a surrogate or agent from overriding a patient's documented personal choice on whether to undergo cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). TMA believes Texas should respect these very personal decisions and protect them against outside interference – no matter how well-meaning.
- **HB 3743 by Coleman** and **SB 2365 by Lucio**, which would require hospitals to adopt strict conflict-of-interest policies for ethics committees and prevent them from devaluing the life of someone with a disability. TMA has seen no evidence that these changes are necessary, but supports them if they enhance public confidence in the Advance Directives Act.

# WE OPPOSE

- **HB 3158 by Raymond** and **SB 2089** by Hughes, which would require hospitals, physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals to provide medically inappropriate and potentially harmful care for an unlimited period of time. This would disrupt significantly the Advance Directives Act's careful balance that puts the patient's best interests first and provides a fair forum for resolving differences.
- **HB 3369 Parker** and **SB 2129 by Creighton**, which would override medical ethics and a physician's professional medical judgment in end-of-life treatment disagreements. While not identical, both of these bills would potentially expose patients to weeks of medically inappropriate care, would impose limits on physicians' use of their professional medical judgment, and would allow nonphysicians to determine what "reasonable medical judgment" is. These bills may lead to invitations to litigation – contrary to another purpose of passing the Advance Directives Act.



Physicians Caring for Texans

[www.texmed.org](http://www.texmed.org) • (512) 370-1550