

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

Procedure No: I.E.PR.007.b

Subject: Withdrawing or Withholding Medical Treatment

Section: Health and Safety

Issue Date: May 26, 2004

Effective Date: upon release

Note: Technical revisions were made to this policy on October 31, 2024, to ensure the policy reflects respectful and person first language. No substantial changes were made.

A. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to assure that individuals receive medically-acceptable standards of care while respecting the individual's right to refuse medical treatment.

B. Applicability

This procedure shall apply to all individuals for whom the department bears direct or oversight responsibility for medical care. This includes people living in programs operated, licensed, and/or funded by the department, including non-Connecticut residents living in such facilities. It also applies to individuals receiving supported living services, respite services in DDS-operated or -funded facilities, and individuals living in facilities licensed by the Department of Public Health if the department was involved with the placement decision.

C. Definitions

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR): An emergency procedure consisting of artificial and manual chest compressions performed in an attempt to revive a person who has gone into cardiac arrest (heart stops beating) and/or respiratory arrest (stops breathing).

End-of-Life Decisions: Decisions made by an individual or other legally-authorized person, to make medical decisions to withdraw or withhold medical treatment (e.g., withhold dialysis, chemotherapy, withdraw life support systems)

Life Support System: Any medical procedure or intervention which, when applied to an individual, would serve only to postpone the moment of death or maintain the individual in a state of permanent unconsciousness. In these circumstances, such procedures shall include, but are not limited to, mechanical or electronic devices including artificial means of providing nutrition or hydration. (CGS 19a-570 (1))

D. Implementation

1. The regional DDS health services director or training school medical director shall be notified immediately when end-of-life decisions that include withholding and/or withdrawing medical treatment are being considered by the individual, his or her family/guardian, physician and/or interdisciplinary team (IDT).
2. The DDS regional health services director or training school medical director shall review the health issues and discuss the pending decision(s) with the individual/family/guardian, physician, and the IDT. This review shall be conducted to assure the individual's right to receive medically-accepted treatment while respecting the person's right to refuse medical treatment if appropriate.
3. If the DDS health services director or training school medical director concurs with the decision to withhold and/or withdraw treatment and this decision will ultimately lead to the individual's death, the

health service director shall assure that the DNR procedure is followed (DDS Procedure No. I.E.PR.007c, Withholding Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation).

4. If the DDS health services director or training school medical director has concerns about the propriety of the decision, he or she will consult with the individual/family/guardian, physician, and IDT to resolve those concerns and shall inform the central office director of health and clinical services.
5. The central office director of health and clinical services shall review the information, discuss the issues with the commissioner and the director of legal and government affairs as appropriate, and assist in resolving the situation.
6. The commissioner may take further informal or formal actions as necessary if the concerns regarding such decision cannot be resolved. These actions may include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Request additional information if necessary
 - b. Discuss the circumstances, diagnoses and other pertinent information with the individual, family and/or guardian and physician(s)
 - c. Consult the department's Director of Legal and Government Affairs
 - d. Initiate formal action such as referral to probate or superior court, or other legal actions

E. References

State Statutes

CGS 17a-238, Rights of persons under supervision of Commissioner of Developmental Services
Chapter 368w, Removal of Life Support Systems

Rules, Regulations - DDS

DDS Client Rights

DDS Case Management policies and procedures

DDS Policy I.E.PO.007, [End of Life Decisions](#)

DDS Procedure I.E.PR.007a, [Advance Directives](#)

DDS Procedure I.E.PR.007c, [Withholding Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation](#)