

Case Study – Mother’s Living Will

I can not remember anything that worried our mother more than the fear of extraordinary efforts to keep her alive, especially electrical resuscitation. Initially we did not take her seriously, but the topic and the insistence increased over a couple of years and I took it upon myself to put together what is called a “living will.” More. My draft was immediately approved by our mother but there were a couple of blanks to be filled in with the names of the sons and/or daughters who would be authorized by her to determine the continuation of those “extraordinary” medical treatments she did not want – often not an easy decision. Weeks went by and it became clear to me that she was struggling with this decision.

I understood her dilemma since with 6 living children, four of whom lived in Puerto Rico, she was either unsure who were the better choices, and/or concerned that she would hurt the feelings of those not chosen. I suggested an amendment to the document that would help overcome her dilemma – the two chosen would consult with all the siblings before communicating a decision to the doctors. This suggestion worked and she named our sister Maritere (the other sister lives in Maryland) and me (being the oldest has its advantages and disadvantages).