

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S "DO NOT RESUSCITATE" PROGRAM  
CHANGES NOW IN EFFECT**

(Richmond, Va.) - Virginia's Durable Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order, which assists people with making health care decisions for themselves, has been revised.

"The Durable DNR Order is a medical directive, signed by a physician and the patient, on a VDH Durable DNR Order form that indicates a person does not want to be resuscitated in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest," according to State Health Commissioner Robert B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H. "By law, it must be honored by emergency medical services (EMS) personnel. It also may be used in health care facilities."

The Durable DNR Order applies to cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) by EMS providers in the patient's home, a long-term care facility, during transport to or from a health care facility and other locations outside of health care facilities. It is the only do not resuscitate order an EMS provider can honor outside of a health care facility. If an EMS provider is responding to a patient already in a health care facility, the provider can honor a written or verbal doctor's order.

If a person has the previous EMS Do Not Resuscitate Order form that had not expired on July 1, 1999, that document can still be honored by EMS providers. It was "grandfathered" into the new Durable DNR program with the same provisions.

"It is important to note that an EMS provider cannot honor living wills and durable powers of attorney," Dr. Stroube said. "These documents lack the EMS-required medical directions signed by the patient's physician."

New changes, effective March 27, 2002, include the availability of state approved bracelets and necklaces, in addition to the Durable DNR Order form. If a valid Durable DNR Order form, bracelet or necklace is presented to EMS personnel upon their arrival, they will initiate comfort care rather than CPR.

(more)

CPR procedures that an EMS provider will withhold if a person has a Durable DNR Order include artificial respiration and intubation to support or restore breathing, and chest compression, electric stimulation or medication to support or restore heart function.

If someone with a Durable DNR is not in cardiac or respiratory arrest, the person will receive emergency medical care.

Do not resuscitate orders are generally chosen by people who are terminally ill or have a serious chronic illness. However, anyone can have a Durable DNR, including minors. A Durable DNR can only be issued by a person's bona-fide physician, who must discuss this decision with the patient or someone designated to act on the patient's behalf.

The patient or the person authorized to represent him can at any time cancel a Durable DNR order, either verbally or by destroying the form.

The Office of EMS provides the Durable DNR form free to physicians and health care facilities. It cannot provide a Durable DNR Order form to the general public.

Approved Durable DNR bracelets and necklaces can be purchased from vendors that have agreed to require a copy of the person's Durable DNR form and to engrave on the bracelet or necklace information required by the state. Vendor names can be requested from the Office of EMS by calling 804-371-3500 and are listed on its Web page – [www.vdh.state.va.us/oems](http://www.vdh.state.va.us/oems).

The Virginia Durable DNR order cannot be honored in other states, nor can Virginia EMS providers recognize a do not resuscitate order from another state.

For more information, contact the Office of Emergency Medical Services, 804-371-3500 or 1-800-523-6019.

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