



Oifig an Chomhairleora Chliniciúil
Náisiúnta agus Ceannaire Grúpa do
Mheabhairshláinte

HSE, Ospidéal an Dr Stevens, Baile Átha
Cliath 8, DO8 W2A8

Office of the National Clinical
Advisor and Group Lead for Mental
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Deputy Mark Ward,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

Date: 27.03.2024

PQ Number: 10574/24

PQ Question: To ask the Minister for Health if an individual with a diagnosed psychiatric disorder can make an advanced directive or decision to the right to taper their medication; if so, to outline the process to do so; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Mark Ward

Dear Deputy Ward,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question, which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

- If a person has decision-making capacity **today**, they can discuss their medication regime with their healthcare provider and agree a treatment plan, without necessity for an advance directive.
- For the **future**, a person can make an advance directive which lets them set out their wishes regarding medical and healthcare treatment in case they are unable to make these decisions in the future. Importantly, it lets them write down any treatment they **do not want** in specific circumstances if they lack decision-making capacity at that time (and this must be observed) or any treatment they **do want** in specific circumstances if they lack decision-making capacity at that time (and this must be taken into consideration).
- So, a person with a mental illness can set out, in an advance directive, the kind of treatment they do not want in a given situation in the future, and the advance directive will be relevant only if the person loses decision-making capacity. Doctors and other healthcare professionals must consult the advance healthcare directive if the person loses the ability to make a treatment decision.
- Also, the person can appoint someone they know and trust as 'designated healthcare representative'. They will act on the person's behalf regarding the decisions in the advance healthcare directive. A designated healthcare representative has the power to advise on and interpret the person's wishes. They can agree to, or refuse treatment on the person's behalf, based on the advance healthcare directive.
- There is more information about this on the website of the Decision Support Service: <https://www.decisionsupportservice.ie/services/decision-support-arrangements/advance-healthcare-directives>

I trust this information is of assistance to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amir Niazi", is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

Dr Amir Niazi
National Clinical Advisor & Group Lead for Mental Health
Clinical Design and Innovation
Health Service Executive