Emergency Health Care Plan Patient and Family Leaflet

What is an emergency health care plan?

An Emergency Health Care Plan (EHCP) is an individualised care plan to ensure quality of life is the focus of care and burdensome interventions including transfer to hospital are minimised. An EHCP does not mean supportive treatment will be withdrawn or withheld. A review by a health care professional is still required when someone becomes unwell. An EHCP can be documented by a GP, community doctor or other trained allied health care professional together with the patient if possible and next of kin.

Who might benefit from an EHCP?
Patients with severe frailty or other significant health conditions whereby hospital admission is unlikely to provide benefit in the event of an acute illness. Patients with strong wishes to avoid further hospital admission. Prognosis is important to consider when balancing risks and benefits of hospital treatment.

How are EHCPs used? Once written and agreed by all involved in decision making, the EHCP will be printed on clearly identifiable purple paper, a copy with placed on the GP record, hospital record and shared with other relevant professionals including ambulance services.

FAQ

Is an EHCP indefinite? No this document can be reviewed when requested by the family/patient.

Is it legally binding? No an EHCP isn't legally binding but it is a statement of wishes and/or preferences about a person's medical treatment.

What is the difference between an advance care plan and EHCP? An advanced care plan is an umbrella term used to describe decision making in advance of becoming unwell, an EHCP generally covers what treatment options are preferred in an emergency/acutely unwell situation.

Can a patient still have an EHCP if they are confused/lack capacity? Yes, this is possible so long as a best interest meeting has occurred with a representative for the patients wishes.