



ONE VOICE FOR
INCLUSIVE
HEALTH

Rick Rader, MD
VP, Policy & Advocacy

Stephen B. Sulkes, MD
President

Allen Wong, DDS
President-Elect

DSP-DNR Policy Statement Committee on Public Policy and Advocacy // May 2019

SUBJECT: THE ROLE OF THE DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AND DO NOT RESUSCITATE (DNR) ORDERS

The AADMD has long recognized the role and contribution of the Direct Support Professional (DSP) in providing, encouraging and supporting healthcare practices for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in the community.

While licensed healthcare professionals have an obligation to honor legally executed DNR orders, DSPs are not licensed healthcare professionals and therefore do not have a legal obligation to honor DNR orders.

Because of high staff turnover, reliance on substitute and fill-in DSPs, incomplete documentation, miscommunication of updated changes, difficulty of obtaining DNR forms (hard copies, authentic electronic copies, verbal changes) and related reasons contributing to the possibility of mistakes in either providing or withholding CPR it is the policy of the AADMD to propose that:

- IN THE ABSENCE OF A LICENSED HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL (physician, nurse, paramedic, EMT) Direct Support Professionals will provide CPR to those individuals, who despite having a legal DNR order, are experiencing a heart attack or respiratory failure.
- Upon the arrival of a license healthcare professional the DSP will announce that he/she is a DSP and they are providing CPR but that there is an active DNR for the individual. The DSP will provide the DNR form to the licensed healthcare professional who would be expected to take over the clinical scenario. It would then be up to the licensed healthcare professional to either continue CPR or discontinue the effort.
- In the event the patient is under hospice care (being provided in the group home) the DSP will revert to the dictates of the hospice care team and allow the hospice care team to conduct the end of life action.
- All agencies subscribing to the above policy will inform the legal conservators (guardians, healthcare decision makers, power of attorneys) who have executed a DNR, about the policy and it will be up to the legal conservator to approve it or make alternative decisions about the individuals care plan (i.e. transfer to another agency).
- The above policy does not in any way ignore, disregard or eliminate the DSPs commitment to honor the decisions of the legal decision makers; it is proposed to protect the DSP from potential misadventures resulting from a system that cannot (at this time) guarantee that the legal DNR is available, understood, accepted and supported.