

Strategies

A RESOURCE FOR THOUGHTFUL PLANNING

RWJUH Foundation | Fall 2026

Annual Reminder: Your Estate Plan

Each year, the third week of October marks National Estate Planning Awareness Week. Established through a U.S. House of Representatives resolution, the observance encourages individuals to take the steps necessary to ensure their wishes for family, loved ones and charitable causes are properly documented.



What is an Estate Plan?

Estate planning, simply defined, is the process of thoughtfully providing for the efficient transfer of your assets to your family and other loved ones in accordance with your wishes. The foundation is typically writing a will but also includes naming beneficiaries of investment or retirement accounts, creating advance directives and providing for your favorite charities, to name a few.

Why do I Need One?

Even a simple estate plan can help ensure that your wishes are carried out as you intend. It can protect and provide for the people you love, offer peace of mind, and make things easier for your family during a difficult time. Without a plan, your loved ones may face unnecessary stress and uncertainty as they navigate your affairs.

Estate planning isn't just for the elderly or wealthy. Everyone needs a plan.

Legacy in Action

Transformational charitable bequests are rare—often occurring only once in a generation. Recently, RWJ University Hospital was honored to receive one such gift from the estate of **Elena "Elly" Petronio**.

Elly's multi-million dollar gift is helping to advance the quality of patient care throughout the hospital and, in particular, for capital projects like the Jack & Sheryl Morris Cancer Center.

Elly and her husband, Giorgio, a Johnson & Johnson executive, emigrated from Genoa, Italy, and made Princeton their home. Deeply committed to their community, they generously supported numerous charitable organizations across the state. Especially passionate about the health of our community, Elly quietly made this extraordinary bequest. In recognition, the hospital established the Petronio Art Gallery and Healing Garden.

RWJUH is profoundly grateful for Elly's visionary generosity. Her legacy strengthens our ability to provide the exceptional care that a world-class academic medical center delivers, and the people of New Jersey deserve.

(Photo: Elena "Elly" Petronio)



Getting Started:

4 Steps to Begin Your Estate Planning

1

Inventory your assets.

3

Identify your beneficiaries.

2

Think about your priorities and legacy.

4

Seek professional assistance.

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Planning Essential: Advance Directives

Advance directives are legal documents that help ensure your health care wishes are honored if you become unable to communicate or make medical decisions for yourself.

There are two primary types of directives. An **instruction directive**, often called a living will, outlines your preferences for medical treatment. A **proxy directive**, also known as a durable power of attorney, allows you to appoint someone to make healthcare decisions on your behalf. To decide what's right for you, start a conversation with your physician or attorney.

It's More Than Your Will

A will, even in a basic form, is the most essential part of estate planning. But it doesn't end there. Other key points to consider:



Do you review your will on a regular basis, as circumstances may have changed?



Does a loved one know where your will, advance directives and other important documents are kept? Are they in a safe location and well organized?



Have you named (and kept up to date) the beneficiaries of your retirement accounts, bank accounts or insurance policies?



Have you thought about your virtual accounts at financial institutions, email access, digital storage or social media accounts? Does a trusted family member have access to the information?

Don't Forget Your DAF

Your donor-advised fund (DAF) can be part of your legacy, too. Consider establishing a succession plan that includes the hospital as an ongoing or final beneficiary.



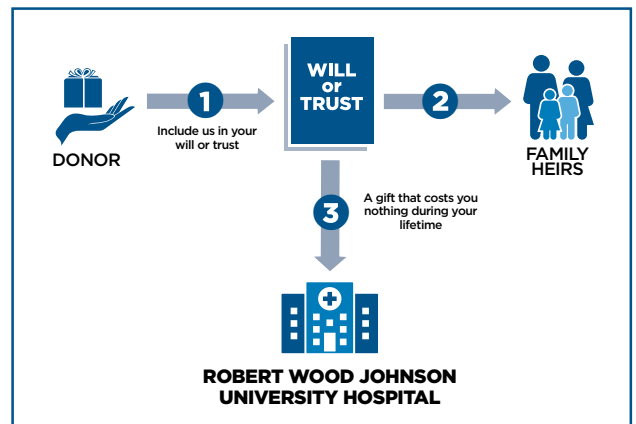
For more information, please [scan here](#).

*Intended as general information only.
Please consult your own tax, legal, or financial advisor.*

One Sentence for a Healthier Tomorrow

If you are passionate about health care in our community or grateful for the care you or a loved one has received, consider including the hospital in your will. A charitable bequest can be as simple as adding one sentence to your will.

Gifts at any level make a difference and can be designated to a specific area of interest, such as cancer care, cardiology or pediatrics, ensuring your generosity reflects the causes you value most.



Your IRA: A Smart Way to Give

Your IRA can be a tax-smart way to support the hospital. If you are 70 ½ or older, the IRS allows for a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) to charity. This is an ideal scenario for those who are philanthropic yet may not necessarily need their required minimum distribution.

IRA charitable gifts are excluded from gross income for federal income tax purposes and, if 73 or older, transfers can count toward your annual required minimum distribution. Transfers must be made directly from a traditional IRA account by your IRA administrator to a qualified charity, and there is a \$111,000 limitation.

Interested in doing even more with your IRA?

Consider naming the hospital as a partial beneficiary of your account.

Impact together.

**To receive a copy of our updated
Estate Planning Guidebook:**

Write: Return the enclosed card

Visit: rwjuhgingiving.org

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