

One current ethical issue in nursing that I have come across a lot in the clinical setting is patients' power of attorney's, code status and living wills. There are several situations, especially in the intensive care unit, where an individual is not competent to make medical decisions for themselves. These situations require patients' power of attorney to step up and make any medical or health related decisions necessary based on how they believe the patient would like to proceed forward. There are different situations where patients' other family members who are not the POA, believe that the POA is acting in a way that is opposite of what the patient has stated their preferences to be in these distinct situations. It is our job as nurses to recognize what supersedes what in these scenarios. A patient's code status relates directed to their preferences of resuscitations (if any) that they would like to be implemented if their heart were to stop beating or if they stopped breathing. A patients' living will is a much more detailed, written statement on what a person would desire regarding their medical treatment in a circumstance where they were no longer to express their preferences or consent to a health care team. This includes an advanced directive which provide detailed instructions that should be implemented if a patient is unable to communicate their own wishes. A patients advanced directives and living will supersede a POA's word on how they wish to continue the patients care. The second ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses states, "A nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group community, or population." This specific code really resonates with this topic because at the end of the day a nurse's duty is to the patient. It is extremely important that our patients wish supersedes anything if we have the access to a living will or advance directive. According to Ohio Laws and Administrative Rules, " To the extent that a known conflict exists between DNR identification based upon a previously executed living will declaration and a more recent valid living will declaration that is operative in accordance with section 2133.03 of the Revised Code, the most recent living will declaration supersedes the previous DNR identification and living will declaration," (paragraph 4, 2014). It is important that nurses are aware of patients advanced directives if available, and that these take precedence over the preference of the POA or family members. It is our job to make sure that the patients situational preferences are being carried out in the way that they stated as their preference, while they were competent enough to make that decision.

*Rule 3701-62-10: Relationship of DNR orders and identification with living will declarations and durable powers of attorney for health care.* Rule 3701-62-10 - Ohio Administrative Code | Ohio Laws. (n.d.). [https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-3701-62-10#:~:text=\(A\)%20To%20the%20extent%20that,durable%20power%20of%20attorney%20for](https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-3701-62-10#:~:text=(A)%20To%20the%20extent%20that,durable%20power%20of%20attorney%20for)