

# In the Age of Coronavirus, Halachic Living Wills an Essential Element in Medical Care

*By: Sandy Eller*

With lifesaving medical equipment in short supply and pressures increasing to forego treating elderly patients, Chayim Aruchim is urging every member of the Jewish community to sign a halachic medical directive to ensure that their religious rights are protected should they become critically ill, r'l.

An unprecedented number of people have found themselves dealing with a gravely ill family member as the coronavirus continues to spread throughout the world. Shortages of ventilators have had doctors and medical institutions forced to prioritize their equipment, creating situations where life-or-death decisions need to be made, often by those who do not share our reverence for human life. By completing a halachic medical directive, members of the Jewish community can ensure that their wishes are recorded for the medical community in a legally binding document which also designates one individual as a decision maker and specifies their chosen rabbinical authority.

Currently, Chayim Aruchim's website has downloadable halachic medical directives for residents of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Quebec, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin. Chayim Aruchim president Rabbi Shmuel Lefkowitz said that over the last few weeks, multiple patients have received lifesaving treatments only because one of their relatives was able to produce a signed halachic medical directive.

“We are currently experiencing a terrible health crisis and every member of Klal Yisroel should sign a halachic living will and have it witnessed today,” said Rabbi Lefkowitz. “We are fighting very powerful forces, especially today, and by having a medical directive in place a person can make their wishes clear and ensure that decisions being made for them are in keeping with their religious beliefs.”

To download a halachic medical directive visit Chayim Aruchim online at <https://www.chayimaruchim.com/Medical-Directives/c-1-121/>