

Your Health Care Wishes

Advance Health Care Directive

for Pennsylvania

Based on Title 20 Pa.C.S. § 5471

An *Advance Health Care Directive* lets you express your health care wishes if you become unable to speak for yourself.

Pennsylvania law gives you the right to say what kinds of health care you would and would not want if you can no longer make those decisions for yourself. To do that, you can fill out this *Advance Health Care Directive* form.

What is an *Advance Health Care Directive*?

An *Advance Health Care Directive* is a legal document that has two parts:

- a living will, and
- a health care power of attorney.

You can use this form to make an *Advance Health Care Directive*. If you want an *Advance Health Care Directive*, but do not want to use this form, it's a good idea to talk to a lawyer.

What is a *living will*?

A *living will* says what treatment you want if you cannot make or say your decisions. This includes whether or not you would want treatment to keep you alive.

What is a *health care power of attorney*?

A *health care power of attorney* is a legal document that lets you choose someone to make health care decisions for you. That person is your health care agent.

How do I choose a health care agent?

1. Choose someone who is willing *and* available.
2. Tell that person you have chosen him or her as your health care agent.
3. Talk to that person about your beliefs and values so s/he understands what you want.

Important! Your health care agent cannot be your doctor or other health care provider unless s/he is related to you by blood, marriage, or adoption.

Can't I just tell my agent what I want without having an *Advance Health Care Directive*?

It is important to put your wishes in writing using a legal form. Otherwise your wishes may not be followed.

What if I do not name a health care agent?

Your doctor will ask someone for help to make decisions about your treatment. That could be your family or some other adult who knows your wishes and values.

What if my health care agent is not available?

This form lets you name another person who can be your agent if the first person is not available.

Naming someone else is a good idea to make sure there will be someone you trust to speak for you.

Can I name my spouse as my agent?

If you name your spouse, it's a good idea to name an alternative agent, too.

When can my health care agent make decisions for me?

If you use *this* form you are saying your health care agent can only speak for you when you cannot speak for yourself.

Who decides when I cannot speak for myself?

Your doctor must say that you:

- Cannot understand, make, or say your decisions,
- Are unconscious and not expected to wake up, or
- Have an end-stage medical condition and will probably die with or without care.

Will my health care agent have to pay for my health care?

No. You must pay for your own health care.

What if my doctor does not want to do what I want?

If your doctor does not want to follow your wishes, s/he must say so, then transfer you to a health care provider who will follow your wishes.

Can I ask someone to help me fill out this form?

Yes. It's a good idea to talk to people you know and trust, such as your family, doctor, or clergy.

What do I do with my *Advance Health Care Directive* when it's completed?

You should give a copy to your:

- Health care agent,
- Doctors,
- Family, and
- Anyone who might be taking care of you if you cannot take care of yourself.

Can I change my mind?

Yes. You can change your mind *at any time*. And if you make a new *Advance Directive*, make sure you give a copy to your health care agent, doctor, family, and anyone else who might need it.