

Choosing A Strong Health Care Agent



An Agent is an appointed representative you name with Power of Attorney to make health care decisions for you when you (the Principal) are no longer capable of making health care decisions for yourself. An Agent may also be referred to as a proxy, representative, attorney-in-fact, surrogate or patient advocate depending on the legal preference of your locality or state. When you are unable to make medical decisions, the Agent designated in your Power of Attorney for Health Care, depending on the terms of your document, can have the authority to:

- Receive the same medical information the principal would receive.
- Review the medical chart, ask questions and confer with the medical team.
- Re-disclose any information received.
- Consent to or refuse medical tests or treatments, including the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.
- Request consultations and second opinions.
- Authorize a transfer to another physician, institution or health care facility.

The following Agent Selection Tool may assist you in determining the best person to act as your Agent. Write in three individuals who might serve as your Agent. For each individual, answer ‘Yes’ (Y) or ‘No’ (N) for the listed criteria. Give strong consideration to naming the person with the most ‘Ys’ and least ‘Ns’ as your primary Agent and one of the other two as your alternate.

REMEMBER: Your Agent must be over 18 years old, and cannot be your health care provider or their employee unless they are your spouse, registered partner, adult child or sibling, and beginning in 2017 parents are included in this group.

CRITERIA	Agent Name #1		Agent Name #2		Agent Name #3	
	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
The individual...						
1. Is physically and mentally able and willing to make health care decisions for you now and into the future.						
2. Is willing and available to discuss sensitive issues with you.						
3. Is willing to make health care decisions based on your expressed choices, rather than on their personal feelings.						
4. Lives in close proximity to you or could easily travel to be with you if needed.						
5. Remains calm in stressful situations, and can face difficult choices.						
6. Could handle conflicting opinions between health care providers and family members and still make decisions that honor your wishes.						
7. Could advocate for you when a physician or health care facility is not being responsive to your needs.						
TOTALS:						