

Making Choices

INFORMATION FOR DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTHCARE

You have been chosen by _____ to be a Durable Power of Attorney for healthcare (DPOAHC). This information is provided so that you understand what it means to a DPOAHC and how you can prepare yourself for this important role.

What is a Durable Power of Attorney for healthcare?

A Durable Power of Attorney for healthcare is a person chosen by a loved one, family or friend to make healthcare decisions, including end-of-life decisions, at any time this person is unable to make their own decisions. Typically, one or more physicians will determine when a person is unable to make his or her own decisions.

What does it mean to be a Durable Power of Attorney for healthcare?

This is a very important role you should take seriously and ask questions about if you are unclear.

The person who has chosen you is expecting that you will make the decisions that he or she would make if able. He or she values and trusts you to carry out his or her wishes.

It means that you should be able to answer “Yes” to the following questions:

- + Am I willing to take this role and responsibility?
- + Do I know the person’s wishes for future medical decisions?
- + Can I make the decisions they would want me to make, even if I disagree with them?
- + Am I able to make major medical decisions under stressful situations?

If you answer “No” to any of these questions, you should talk about your concerns with the person who has chosen you.

What types of decisions would you make as a Durable Power of Attorney for healthcare?

- ...about medical care or services, like tests, medicine and surgery
- ...about stopping treatment as indicated by the person’s stated instructions or by what is in the person’s best interest
- ...about interpreting instructions the person has given you
- ...about reviewing and releasing medical records if needed
- ...about moving the person to another facility
- ...about which health professionals and organizations provide care

Things you can do to prepare yourself to be a Durable Power of Attorney for healthcare.

Take the time to talk to the person who has chosen you and understand their preferences for future medical care, including medical decisions that may come at the end-of-life.

Ask the person to help you understand what they mean if they say things like “I want to die with dignity” or “Don’t keep me alive if I’m a vegetable” or “Just make me comfortable.” ***These kinds of statements often mean different things to different people and discussing their meaning in detail is very important.***

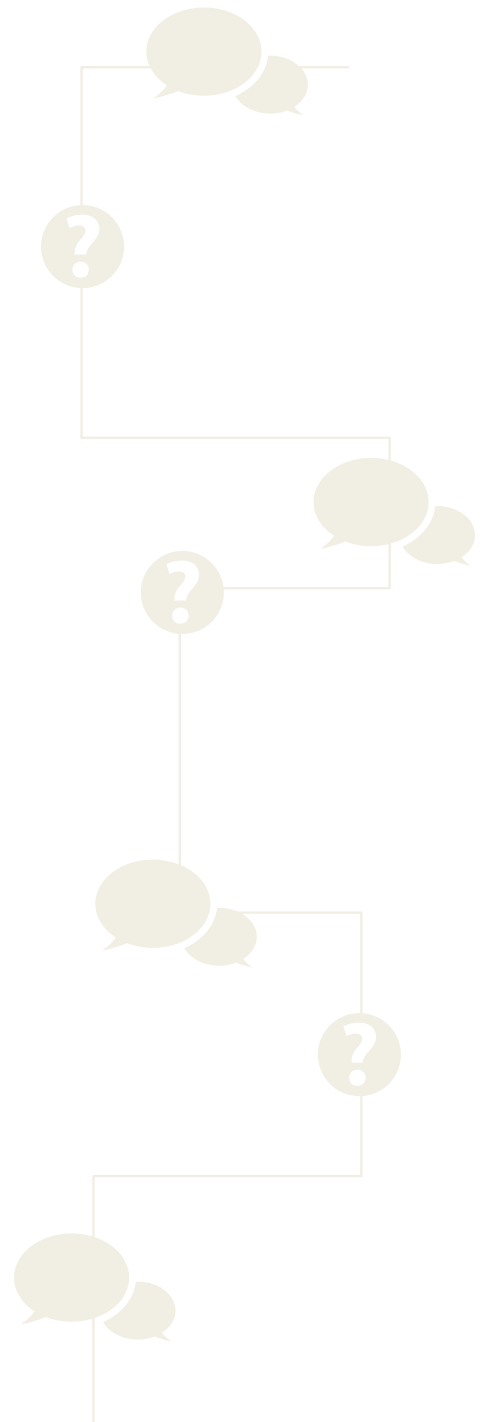
Some people want their healthcare agent to follow their stated preferences strictly and others want their agent to have more leeway in making decisions. To find out how much leeway you are to have, ask the person: “Is it more important to follow your instructions about future medical treatment strictly as written or am I to take your instructions into consideration with other information and do what seems best at the time?”

Try to go with the person to a doctor’s appointment. You and the doctor can get to know each other and you can ask questions regarding the person’s health condition and choices they make about their care.

You may want to talk to other professionals who specialize in helping people make future medical decisions. They include physicians, nurses, social workers and clergy, among others.

Remember: While talking about these issues may be uncomfortable, the more you understand, the better Durable Power of Attorney for healthcare you will be. Your efforts and concern are truly an act of love.

Information courtesy of Honoring Choices Minnesota.



A FAITH-BASED, NOT-FOR-PROFIT HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

RIVERSIDE METHODIST HOSPITAL + GRANT MEDICAL CENTER + DOCTORS HOSPITAL
GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL + DUBLIN METHODIST HOSPITAL + HARDIN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
MARION GENERAL HOSPITAL + REHABILITATION HOSPITAL + O'BLENESS HOSPITAL + MANSFIELD HOSPITAL
SHELBY HOSPITAL + WESTERVILLE MEDICAL CAMPUS + HEALTH AND SURGERY CENTERS + PRIMARY AND SPECIALTY CARE
URGENT CARE + WELLNESS + HOSPICE + HOME CARE + 28,000 PHYSICIANS, ASSOCIATES & VOLUNTEERS

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