

## Power of Attorney for Health Care and Instructions for Completing a Health Care Directive

**Overview:** The Power of Attorney for Health Care/Health Care Directive form is a legal document, developed to meet the basic legal requirements for Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa.

The Power of Attorney for Health Care form allows you to:

- name one or more persons to make your health care decisions if you are unable to make them for yourself
- write down your goals/preferences for future medical care if you are unable to make these decisions

The person you appoint to manage your health care is called your **health care agent**. Family members can be good choices but not always. Make sure you pick someone who will closely follow your preferences and will be your advocate.

*Your health care agent may make your decisions only when you are unable to do so.*

It does not allow your health care agent to:

- make financial or other business decisions
- make certain decisions about your mental health treatment

Before completing the Power of Attorney for Health Care form, take the time to read it carefully. It is important that you discuss this document and your views and values with your health care agent(s). If you do not closely involve your health care agent(s) and you do not make a clear plan together, your views and values and medical treatment goals may not be fully respected because they will not be understood.

This is an important legal document. It gives your health care agent broad powers to make health care decisions for you. If you wish to change/update your Power of Attorney for Health Care, complete a new form and distribute it to those individuals/facilities that have your original version on file.

**The Power of Attorney for Health Care form is divided into four parts:**

- Part 1 – names and appoints your health care agent(s) and provides their contact information
- Part 2 – outlines the general authority of your health care agent
- Part 3 – identifies your specific goals for your health care
- Part 4 – makes this a legal document after you have it signed and witnessed

**After Completing the Power of Attorney for Health Care:** You will keep and maintain the original. Do not keep your Power of Attorney for Health Care in a safety deposit box where it will not be available to others when it is needed.

Make copies to give to:

- your health care agent and alternates appointed in the document
- your health care providers (your physician, the hospital or facility where you receive health care)
- other important people in your life such as immediate family members who are not your health care agent(s) but should be aware of your health care plan.

**Driver's License:** You can indicate you have a Power of Attorney for Health Care and organ donation on your driver's license. Contact your local Department of Motor Vehicle for more information.

**Review:** Your Power of Attorney for Health Care on a regular basis especially if you have had changes:

- in your health status
- if your goals and preferences change
- if you need to change your health care agent
- if contact information such as addresses and phone numbers have changed for you or your agent(s)

**Do Not Confuse a Power of Attorney for Health Care** with estate planning tools such as a Will or a Power of Attorney for Finances. Without a Power of Attorney for Finances, a court proceeding for conservatorship may be necessary to provide authority over your financial affairs.

The law regarding Power of Attorney for Health care may not be the same in all 50 states in the U.S. If you spend a great deal of time in another state, it is recommended to check with that health care facility to see if a different form is required.