

Power of Attorney for Healthcare and Instructions for Completing a Healthcare Directive

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

The Power of Attorney for Healthcare form allows you to:

- name one or more persons to make your healthcare 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 healthcare is called your **healthcare 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 healthcare agent may make your decisions only when you are unable to do so.

It does not allow your healthcare agent to:

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

Before completing the Power of Attorney for Healthcare form, take the time to read it carefully. It is important that you discuss this document and your views and values with your healthcare agent(s). If you do not closely involve your healthcare 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 healthcare agent broad powers to make healthcare decisions for you. If you wish to change/update your Power of Attorney for Healthcare, complete a new form and distribute it to those individuals/facilities that have your original version on file.

The Power of Attorney for Healthcare form is divided into four parts:

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

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

Make copies to give to:

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

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

Review: Your Power of Attorney for Healthcare 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 healthcare 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 Healthcare 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 Healthcare 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 healthcare facility to see if a different form is required.