

Healthcare Power of Attorney: A Quick Guide

Your Values, Goals, and Voice Matter

A Healthcare Power of Attorney (HPOA) is a written legal document that allows you to choose someone you trust to be your **medical decision-maker** in case you are not able to make decisions for yourself because of injury or illness. **This person is called your agent.** Your agent understands your personal values and choices about your medical care.

Having a Healthcare Power of Attorney is a gift you give your loved ones who may struggle during a medical emergency to make choices about your care.

Making a Healthcare Power of Attorney helps make sure you get the care you want, even when someone has to make medical decisions for you because you are not able to do so yourself.

Make sure you are heard when you cannot speak for yourself. Ask your healthcare team for forms to help you create your HPOA.

Who Needs a Healthcare Power of Attorney

If you are over the age of 18 it is important to have a Healthcare Power of Attorney. An accident or a change in your medical condition can happen suddenly without warning.

The easiest time to talk about your medical care wishes is before illness or injury, when you have time to think and talk with those you trust.

Choose someone to be your medical decision-maker who:

- Is at least 18 years old
- You trust to follow your wishes, even if they differ from theirs
- Can honor your wishes
- Can work well under pressure
- Can understand the care you want

Steps to Making a Healthcare Power of Attorney

- 1. Choose your medical decision-maker.** This can be anyone you choose over the age of 18.
- 2. Think about your values** for medical decisions and talk to your medical decision-maker about your wishes.
- 3. Complete and sign the Healthcare Power of Attorney Form (HPOA).** Ask one person who is not your medical decision-maker or your health care team to sign the form as your witness.
- 4. Share a copy of your HPOA form** with your medical decision-maker and your health care team at your next medical appointment.
- 5. Keep your HPOA form** in a place where it can be found in case of an emergency.
- 6. Review your HPOA form** and keep it up to date.

For More Information and Resources

UChicago Medicine Advance Care Planning Guide and Forms

www.uchicagomedicine.org/advancecareplanning

