Living Will/Health Care Power of Attorney

Living wills and health care powers of attorney help healthcare providers and family members coordinate your care when you are seriously ill and no longer able to communicate or make decisions about medical treatment.

I. Choosing Your Documents

Decide whether you want one or both:

☐ A living will (also known as an advance health care directive or health care declaration) states your wishes about such things as organ donation and being placed on life support if you are terminally ill.

☐ A health care power of attorney authorizes someone to make medical decisions for you if you are incapacitated and can’t make them on your own.

II. Personal Information

☐ Your name and address

☐ Your birthdate

☐ Your current marital status

☐ If married, your spouse’s name

III. Health Care and Medical Wishes

Your living will communicates your wishes about organ donation and being kept on life support if you are terminally ill. You will need to decide:

☐ Whether you want to be kept on artificial life support if you have a terminal condition with no hope of recovering.

If you don’t want to be kept on life support, you can specify when support should be withdrawn:

☐ If you are in a persistent vegetative state.

☐ If you are terminally ill or injured.

☐ If you have an end-stage condition or illness.
Living wills make things easier for family members and medical professionals, who won’t have to guess what you would have wanted. Health care powers of attorney help both families and health care providers by putting someone in charge of communicating with doctors and hospitals and making decisions about your care and treatment.

Choose someone who you know well, who understands the type of care you would want, and who is not afraid to ask questions and advocate to doctors. An agent should also be able to communicate well with family members. Many people choose their spouse or another family member as agent.

- Whether you still want to receive food and water.
- Any circumstance in which you would NOT want pain medication.
- Whether you want to be an organ donor, and the ways your organs can be used:
  - For medical purposes such as transplants
  - For education or research
  - If you don’t want to donate everything, the parts or organs you do want to donate.
  - Any other instructions to include in your living will.

### IV. Health Care Agent

Your health care agent makes decisions and communicates with medical providers if you are unable to. You’ll need to provide:

- The name of your agent.
- The agent’s relationship to you.
- The agent’s contact information, if you know it.
- The name, relationship and contact information for an alternate.
- Health care agents are usually authorized to make all health care decisions for you.
- List any types of decisions that you don’t want your agent to make, like whether your agent will have control over your remains or if you want them to determine whether an autopsy should be performed.