



How to Select Your Health Care Agent

Name & Date _____

When you decide to pick someone to speak for you in a medical crisis, in case you are not able to speak for yourself, there are several things to think about. This tool will help you decide who the best person is. Usually it is best to name *one* person or agent to serve at a time, with at least one successor, or back-up person, in case the first person is not available when needed.

Compare up to 3 people with this tool. The persons best suited to be your Health Care Agents rate well on these qualifications...

Name #1:		
Name #2:		
Name #3:		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Meets the legal criteria in your state for acting as agent or representative? (This is a must! See next page.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Would be willing to speak on your behalf.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Would be able to act on your wishes and separate his/her own feelings from yours.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Lives close by or could travel to be at your side if needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Knows you well and understands what's important to you.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Could handle the responsibility.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Will talk with you now about sensitive issues and will listen to your wishes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Will likely be available long into the future.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9. Would be able to handle conflicting opinions between family members, friends, and medical personnel.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10. Can be a strong advocate in the face of an unresponsive doctor or institution.

The person you choose to make health care decisions for you is known by different names in different states. This person is sometimes called a health care agent, proxy, representative, attorney-in-fact, surrogate, or even patient advocate.

Who Can't be a Health-Care Agent?

State rules for who may be a health care proxy vary, but in Mississippi your health-care agent may NOT be:

- ! Anyone under age 18.
- ! Your health care provider, including the owner or operator of a health or residential or community care facility serving you -- unless this person is your spouse or close relative.
- ! An employee of your health care provider -- unless this person is your spouse or close relative.

WHAT TO DO AFTER YOU PICK A HEALTH CARE AGENT?

- ! Talk to your agent about the qualifications on the first page of this worksheet.
- ! Ask permission to name him or her as your agent.
- ! Discuss your health care wishes and values and fears.
- ! Make sure your agent gets an original copy of your advance directive.
- ! Tell family members and close friends who you picked.

This worksheet adapted by the American Bar Association's Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly from
R. Pearlman, et. al., *Your Life Your Choices – Planning for Future Medical Decisions:
How to Prepare a Personalized Living Will*, Veterans Administration Medical Center, Seattle, Washington