

Health Care Agent



This guide will help you learn about the role of the health care agent.

What is a health care agent?

A health care agent is a person who makes health care decisions for someone who can't make their own choices. An agent may be needed if the person is very sick, injured or is nearing the end of their life. Choose a health care agent *before* a crisis.

When does a health care agent start to make choices?

An agent makes choices *only* if the person is not able to. Two doctors (or a doctor and a psychologist) have to agree that the person is not able to make his or her own choices.

What are some of the decisions that a health care agent may need to make?

A health care agent makes decisions *based upon the person's wishes and values*. An agent may make the following choices for the person:

- Decide on tests, surgery and medicine
- Choose the patient's doctor(s)
- Choose the location(s) where the person may receive care
- Decide to stop treatment
- Decide whether to share the patient's medical records

How do I know if I am ready to be a health care agent?

You should be able to answer "yes" to all of these questions:

- Am I willing?
- Have I spoken with the person about what he or she values?
- Can I follow the person's wishes even if I do not agree with them?
- Am I able to make choices in difficult moments?

Honoring Choices Wisconsin
www.honoringchoiceswi.org

Copyright 2000-2016. All rights reserved. Gundersen Medical Foundation, Inc.
Used under license from Gundersen Medical Foundation, Inc.

The name "Honoring Choices Wisconsin" is used under license from the Twin Cities Medical Society Foundation.

January 2017