

Choosing a Healthcare Surrogate



WHAT IS A HEALTHCARE SURROGATE?

A person you choose to make medical decisions for you when you are unable to speak for yourself.

ROLE OF THE SURROGATE:

The surrogate has the authority to make any and all healthcare decisions you would make if you were able.

This includes:

- accepting, refusing, or withdrawing medical treatments
- applying for public benefits to defray the cost of your healthcare
- authorizing your admission to or transfer from a healthcare facility
- speaking with your healthcare team on your condition and treatments options
- reviewing your medical record and authorizing its release when needed

CHOOSING YOUR SURROGATE:

In choosing your surrogate, consider if he/she:

- is legally able to serve as your surrogate (must be competent, at least 18 years old)
- will be available and willing to speak on your behalf when needed
- knows you well and understands your values and beliefs
- will be comfortable asking questions of your healthcare team
- will do his/her best to make the medical care decisions that you would make (whether or not he/she agrees with you)
- will be your advocate and handle conflict with others who might disagree with your wishes
- can make difficult decisions under stress

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT HAVE A SURROGATE AND I AM UNABLE TO SPEAK FOR MYSELF?

Health care decisions may be made for you by any of the following individuals, in the following order of priority:

1. Judicially appointed guardian
2. Patient's spouse
3. Adult child of the patient
4. Patient's Parent
5. Adult sibling of the patient
6. Adult relative of the patient
7. Close friend of the patient
8. A clinical social worker licensed pursuant to chapter 491, or who is a graduate of a court-approved guardianship program.

* See section 765.401, Florida Statutes.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- You can also choose an alternate surrogate in case your primary surrogate is unable or unavailable to make decisions.
- Talk to your surrogate about your wishes and give him/her a copy of your advance directive.
- To avoid confusion, tell your loved ones whom you selected as your surrogate.
- You may select a new surrogate at any time.

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