

Vermont Advance Directive for Health Care

Prepared by the Vermont Ethics Network

EXPLANATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

- You have the right to give instructions about what types of health care you want or do not want.
- You also have the right to name someone else to make health care decisions for you when you are unable to make them yourself. You may also have the agent's authority begin immediately or on the occurrence of an event or condition.
- You may do either of these by telling your family or your doctor, but it is generally better for you and your family if you write down your wishes.
 - You may use this form in its entirety or you may use any part of it. For example, if you simply want to choose an agent in **Part One**, you may do so and go directly to **Part Five** to sign this in the presence of appropriate witnesses.
- You are also free to use a different form as long as it is properly signed and witnessed.

Part One of this form lets you name a person as your “agent” to make health care decisions for you if you become unable to make your own decisions. You may also name co-agents or alternate agents. You should choose as your agent (and alternates) people you trust, who are going to be comfortable making what might be hard decisions on your behalf. They should know you and be guided by your values in making choices for you.

You should notify your agents that you have named them, and they need to agree to act as your agent if asked to do so. Your agent does not have authority to make decisions for you until the time you specify or you are unable to make your own decisions.

If you do not appoint an agent, and then become unable to make your own decisions, someone else will need to make health care decisions for you.

Part Two of this form lets you state **Treatment Wishes**. Choices are provided for you to express your wishes about having, not having, or stopping treatment necessary to keep you alive under certain circumstances. Space is also provided for you to write out any additional or specific wishes based on your values, health condition, or beliefs.

Part Three of this form lets you express your wishes about **organ or tissue donation**.

Part Four is for you to express your wishes about autopsy and **funeral arrangements**.

Part Five of this form is for **signatures**. You must sign and date the form in the presence of two adult witnesses. The following persons may **NOT** serve as witnesses: your agent and alternate agents, your spouse or partner, reciprocal beneficiary, siblings, parents, children or grandchildren.

You should give copies of the completed form to your agent and alternate agents, to your physician, to your family, and to any health care facility where you reside or at which you are likely to receive care. You should keep a list of those who have copies in case you revoke or revise the document in the future. You have the right to revoke all or part of this advance directive for health care or replace this form at any time. If you do revoke it, all old copies should be destroyed.

You may wish to read the booklet *Taking Steps* to help you think about and discuss different choices and situations with your agent or loved ones.

Advance Directive

MY NAME DATE OF BIRTH

ADDRESS

CITY STATE..... ZIP

Part One: Appointment of My Health Care Agent

I appoint

ADDRESS

TEL. (DAY) (EVENING)

CELLPHONE EMAIL

as my Health Care **Agent** to make any and all health care decisions for me, *except to the extent that I state otherwise in this document.* If you appoint co-agents, list above or on a separate sheet of paper.

If this health care agent is unavailable, unwilling, or unable to do this for me, I appoint

..... to be my **Alternate Agent.**

ADDRESS:

TEL. (DAY) (EVENING)

CELLPHONE EMAIL

Use additional sheet to appoint additional agents or alternates.

Others who can be consulted about medical decisions on my behalf include:

.....
.....

Those who should *not* be consulted include:

.....

Your agents should have been notified that you appointed them, they should understand your wishes, and they should agree to make health care decisions for you when you can no longer make them for yourself or when you specify their authority begins. It is encouraged that you and your doctor discuss this document.

(Optional) The space below is to identify your doctor or health care provider. Note: your doctor cannot also serve as your health care agent.

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN OR CLINICIAN

ADDRESS TELEPHONE

OTHER HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

ADDRESS TELEPHONE

MY NAME DATE OF BIRTH

Part Two: Treatment Wishes

Please express your preferences that follow by initialing or checking the statements. **You may initial more than one choice.** Draw a line through any statement you do not agree with. If you do nothing, your agent or others such as family members and doctors treating you will assume you want them to decide for you. **If you do not state a preference for withholding or withdrawing artificial food and hydration (tube feeding), your agent may not have authority to withhold or withdraw it, without a court order, if you are being treated in a New York or New Hampshire hospital.**

_____ **A. My choice is to limit treatment.**

(Initial or check those statements below that you agree with.)

- _____ 1. I do not want to be kept alive if I am so sick that I will die within a relatively short time (I cannot get better and have only weeks, days, or hours left to live).
- _____ 2. I do not want to be kept alive if I become unconscious or unaware of my surroundings and most doctors agree that I will never regain consciousness.
- _____ 3. I do not want to be kept alive if I become unable to think or act for myself (and won't get better).
- _____ 4. I do not want to be kept alive if the likely risks and burdens of treatment would outweigh the expected benefits. (Specify what is most important for you.)
- _____ 5. If it is possible that I might recover with treatment and **more time is needed** to determine if I can get better or not, I wish my medical team to start the necessary treatments to keep me alive. If, over time, these treatments do not improve my chances of living or my physical condition, I wish to have life-sustaining treatment stopped.
- _____ 6. If I am also unable to swallow enough food and water to stay alive, I **do** want food and water to be given to me by vein or by feeding tube; or
- _____ 7. If I am also unable to swallow enough food and water to stay alive, I **do not** want food and water to be given to me by vein or feeding tube; however, I will accept medication for pain and agitation via an IV line.
- _____ 8. Other specific instructions are as follows:

.....

.....

.....

.....

_____ **B. My choice is to sustain life.** I want to be kept alive as long as possible through any means possible regardless of my condition or awareness.

MY NAME DATE OF BIRTH

Specific Care Wishes Near the End of My Life

_____ If it becomes clear to my doctor, my agent, and those caring for me that I am dying, I want palliative care for my pain, worries, nausea, and other conditions that bother me. I want sufficient **pain medication** even though it may have the *unintended effect* of hastening my death.

_____ I want **hospice care** when I am dying, if possible and appropriate.

_____ I prefer to **die at home**, if this is possible.

Spiritual and Other Care Concerns

I am of the _____ faith. Below is the contact information (if known).

Church, synagogue, or worship center:

..... ADDRESS

LEADER TEL.

Other people to notify if I have a life-threatening illness:

.....

The following items or music or readings would be a comfort to me:

.....

Part Three: Instructions about Organ and Tissue Donation

I want my agent (if I have appointed one), family, friends, and all who care about me to follow my wishes about organ and tissue donation if that is an option at the time of my death. ***It is strongly encouraged that you talk with your family and your health care agent about your wishes regarding organ and tissue donation.*** (Initial below all that apply.)

_____ I wish to donate the following organs and tissues:

- _____ any needed organs
- _____ major organs (heart, lungs, kidneys, etc.)
- _____ tissues such as skin and bones
- _____ eye tissue such as corneas

_____ I desire to donate my body to research or educational programs. (Note: you will have to make your own arrangements through a Medical School or other program.)

_____ I do **not** wish to be an organ donor.

_____ If an **autopsy** is suggested for any reason, I give my permission to have it done.

MY NAME DATE OF BIRTH

Part Four: My Wishes for Disposition of My Remains Following My Death

I. The person I want to serve as my agent for disposition of my body:

a. _____ I want my health care agent to decide arrangements after my death.

_____ If he or she is not available, I want my alternate agent to decide.

b. _____ Regardless of my appointment of a health care agent in Part One, I appoint the following person to decide about and arrange for the disposition of my body after my death:

NAME EMAIL

ADDRESS

TEL. CELLPHONE

(or)

c. _____ I want my family to decide.

II. My preference for burial or disposition of my remains after death:

_____ I want a funeral followed by burial in a casket at the following location, if possible (please state where the burial plot is located and whether it has been prepurchased):

.....
.....

_____ I want to be cremated and have my ashes buried or distributed as follows:

.....
.....

_____ I want to have arrangements made at the direction of my agent or family.

III. I have a pre-need contract for funeral arrangements with the following funeral service:

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL.

MY NAME DATE OF BIRTH

Part Five: Signed Declaration of Wishes

SIGNED DATE

The witnesses below confirm the signature of the maker of this document and that it is being signed by that person as a free and voluntary act. The following people may *not* sign as witnesses: your agent, spouse, reciprocal beneficiary, parent, sibling, adult child, or grandchild.

(Please sign and print)

FIRST WITNESS

ADDRESS

SECOND WITNESS

ADDRESS

If the maker is a current patient or resident in a hospital, nursing home, or residential care home, the following *additional witness* confirms that he or she has explained the nature and effect of the Advance Directive to the principal and that the principal understands this. (Hospital explainer or Long-term-care Ombudsman or clergy, attorney, or probate court designee):

NAME TITLE/POSITION

ADDRESS DATE

Important!

Please check below the people and locations that will have a copy of this document:

- _____ Vermont Advance Directive Registry (available by mid-2006)
- _____ Health care agent
- _____ Alternate health care agent
- _____ Family members (name and address of all who have copies)

NAME _____	ADDRESS _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(continued next page)

_____ MD NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ Hospital(s) NAME _____

_____ Other individuals or locations: *(use additional sheet if needed)*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____



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*Explanation & Instructions
Advance Directive Forms*