



Advance Care Planning is a Gift to You and Your Family

Sudden illness or accident can happen to anyone at any time. Preparing in advance minimizes conflict and uncertainty about decisions that may arise. Talk to your family, friends and health care providers about what matters most to you.



An advance care planning initiative by
Vermont Ethics Network. For more information,
contact us at:

802.828.2909
www.TakingStepsVT.org



STEP

1

**TAKING
STEPS
VERMONT**

Appointing a Health Care Agent

Take the First Step



STEP

1 Appointing a Health Care Agent

If you are 18 years of age or older, it is important to appoint a health care agent to speak on your behalf if you are unable to speak for yourself.



Step 1: Appointing a Health Care Agent

A health care agent is:

- ▲ Someone you trust.
- ▲ Chosen in advance to make decisions on your behalf.
- ▲ Willing to ask questions of the health care team and advocate for your wishes.

Benefits of Having an Agent

- ▲ Reduces the chance of doubts or disagreements about who you trust to make decisions for you.
- ▲ Your agent will have access to the medical information necessary to make informed decisions.
- ▲ They can talk with your health care team about your medical condition and authorize treatment or have it withdrawn, consistent with your wishes and values.
- ▲ Your agent will work with the health care team to figure out what to do when a specific situation arises that you did not foresee.
- ▲ If healthcare providers resist following your wishes, your agent will work to see that your wishes are honored.

Completing the Form

The form requires only your signature and two witnesses. Once completed:

- ▲ Give copies to your agent, your health care provider, and your local hospital.
- ▲ Send your document to the Vermont Advance Directive Registry where it can be accessed when needed.

You have the right to change your mind and update your document at any time. Just complete a new form and give updated, signed and witnessed copies to your agent, doctor's office, hospital and the registry.