



Use New Georgia Document to Make Your Health Wishes Known

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In July 2007, the Georgia Advance Directive for Health Care Act went into effect. The new law creates a simpler, comprehensive document that people in Georgia can use to express their choices about their health care. This new, single document takes the place of the old living will and durable medical power of attorney.

The Advance Directive for Health Care allows a person to describe in writing what he or she wants done in case of a coma or death. The Directive has four parts. Not all four parts have to be filled out and a person can change the Directive at any time.

Here are the Directive's descriptions for each of the four parts:

Part One: Health Care Agent – allows you to choose someone to make health care decisions for you when you cannot (or do not want to) make health care decisions for yourself. The person you choose is called a health care agent. You may also have your health care agent make decisions for you after your death with respect to an autopsy, organ donation, body donation, and final disposition of your body. You should talk to your health care agent about this important role.

Part Two: Treatment Preferences – allows you to state your treatment preferences if you have a terminal condition or if you are in a state of permanent unconsciousness. Part Two will become effective only if you are unable to communicate your treatment preferences. Reasonable and appropriate efforts will be made to communicate with you about your treatment preferences before Part Two becomes effective. You should talk to your family and others close to you about your treatment preferences.

Part Three: Guardianship – allows you to nominate a person to be your guardian should one ever be needed.

Part Four: Effectiveness and Signatures – requires your signature and the signatures of two witnesses. You must complete Part Four if you have filled out any other part of this form.

The new form is designed so that the average person can read and understand it. It is available on the website of the Georgia Bar Association, http://www.gabar.org/news/new_advance_directive_for_health_care_act_signed/. You can also request a copy from your Hemophilia of Georgia outreach nurse or social worker.