

Choose the Best Person to Make Care Decisions for You

If you become incapacitated (unable to speak or make decisions), someone else will need to make care decisions on your behalf. You can choose in advance who that person will be. That's the best way to obtain the care you would want and avoid what you wouldn't want. Don't assume that the best person will be put in charge of your care decisions. Choose the best person now.

Your Scorecard

List your top candidates to make decisions for you and enter the Points they earn from the Six Key Factors below. Those with the highest Total Points are your best choices.

| Candidate Name | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | Total Points |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------------|
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Six Key Factors and Points

(1) Legal Age

California law requires that the person you name must be at least 18 years old at the time they make decisions for you. Pick a point level for each Candidate and enter it in column (1):

- 5 Points: The Candidate is at least age 18.
- 3 Points: The Candidate is not yet age 18 but will be by the time they need to act.
- 0 Points: Neither of the above.

(2) Clearheadedness

Care decisions require memory, judgment and calmness. When the time comes, the person who will speak for you must have their memory and judgment operating fully. Do not select a person who is already showing signs of memory or judgment loss, or who would have difficulty remaining calm. Pick a point level for each Candidate and enter it in column (2):

- 5 Points: The Candidate is highly likely to be clearheaded.
- 2 Points: I'm not sure the Candidate will be clearheaded.
- 0 Points: The Candidate will not have those abilities.

(3) Availability

When the time comes, the medical team will need to reach and communicate with the person you choose. They can be across country, or even in another country, if they can be available by phone or the internet. These are not necessarily emergency decisions, but will be made over a span of

time. So think beyond geographical availability -- will they also have the time to step up? Pick a point level for each Candidate and enter it in column (3):

- 5 Points: The Candidate is highly likely to be available.
- 2 Points: I'm not sure the Candidate will be available.
- 0 Points: The Candidate will not be available.

(4) Communicating About Personal Things

For the person to be effective for you, you must have communicated with them in advance about personal beliefs and what matters to you. About your values, your beliefs, life and death. Not everyone can do that well. Some are better at discussing finances, others better at personal communication. Pick a point level for each Candidate and enter it in column (4):

- 5 Points: The Candidate is someone I can communicate with about personal things.
- 2 Points: I'm not sure that I can communicate with the Candidate about personal things.
- 0 Points: The Candidate is not someone I can communicate with about personal things.

(5) Asserting and Persuading

Hospitals and other care settings can be intimidating. When the time comes, the person will need to be able to ask questions and get answers from doctors and medical staff. They must be persistent and an effective advocate. They will have to stand up for you against those (including family members) who disagree. Pick a point level for each Candidate and enter it in column (5):

- 5 Points: The Candidate is someone who will readily be assertive and effective.
- 2 Points: I'm not sure whether the Candidate could be assertive and effective.
- 0 Points: The Candidate is not someone who could be assertive in this situation.

(6) Honoring Your Wishes

It's the person's job to follow your wishes, even if they don't agree with them. If your wish would be to stop life support, the right Candidate would honor that wish. Your spouse or child might not be the right person for this. Pick a point level for each Candidate and enter it in column (6):

- **10 Points:** The Candidate would honor my wishes even if they disagreed.
- 2 Points: I'm not sure whether the Candidate would honor my wishes if they disagreed.
- 0 Points: The Candidate would not be able to honor my wishes if they disagreed.

What's Next?

- Make your selections official** in an up-to-date Health Care Power of Attorney / Advance Directive document. You can do this yourself, just follow the instructions carefully.
- In your document **name your top three** in Total Points order (first, then second, then third). Do not name co-agents with equal authority (equal authority can lead to a stand-off).
- Tell everyone** who might be involved (family and friends) about your selections.

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