



## **Who should be your health care agent?**

Here are some things to consider when choosing a health care agent:

- Does the person know you well?
- Will the person be too emotionally involved to make important decisions?
- Will the person feel comfortable going along with your wishes?
- Are you certain the person will be persistent with your doctors and stand up for your wishes?
- Is the person accessible and available to serve as your health care agent?

By law, some people may not serve as your health care agent. This includes anyone under age 18 (21 in Colorado) and your attending physician (some states exclude all health care workers in your medical facility).

## **Who should receive a copy of my advance directive?**

**Anyone who might be called on to make a decision for you. With that in mind, it is especially important to give a copy to:**

### **Your Health Care Agent:**

This person is listed on your advance directive as being your advocate for health care decisions if you are incapacitated.

### **Your Physician:**

The next time you have an appointment, take your document along to discuss with your doctor. Again, this is of great benefit to you. Your doctor will be able to advocate for your health care by knowing, in advance, your wishes. The document will get added to your file.

### **Members of your family:**

It is helpful for your family to know your wishes. It gives them a chance to prepare ahead of time for a medical emergency, instead of having to make a decision in the midst of a crisis.

### **Close friends:**

If you have a neighbor, roommate, or close friend that would like to know your wishes, it would be good to give them a copy. The more resources your healthcare providers have in case of emergency, the more likely your wishes will be followed. These friends and neighbors can also be a good source of support for family members who may not see you as often.

**Clergy:**

If there is a clergy member who would be contacted during your medical treatment, it is helpful to let this person also know your wishes.

**Your hospital:**

Each hospital has a social worker on staff who can review the document with you and who can add the document to your medical record. You can also give copies to several hospitals. For example, perhaps your insurance coverage states that you must seek treatment at a hospital in Madison, but you have an accident in Stoughton and there's no time to take you to Madison. You could keep a copy on record at Stoughton Hospital and another copy at the Madison hospital.