

Your Right to Make Decisions About Medical And Mental Health Treatment



Sonoma County Department of Health Services

Behavioral Health Division: Mental Health Services

2227 Capricorn Way
Santa Rosa CA 95407-5419

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This document explains your right to make healthcare decisions and how you can plan for your medical care if you are unable to speak for yourself in the future.

A federal law requires us to give you this information. We hope this information will help increase your control over your medical and mental health treatment.

Who decides about my treatment?

Your doctors will give you information and advice about treatment. You have the right to choose. You can say "Yes" to treatments you want. You can say "No" to any treatment, that you don't want - even if the treatment might keep you alive longer.

How do I know what I want?

Your doctor must tell you about your medical condition and about what different treatments and pain management alternatives can do for you. Many treatments have "side effects." Your doctor must offer you information about problems that medical treatment is likely to cause you. Often, more than-one treatment might help you and people have different ideas about which is best.

Your doctor can tell you which treatments are available to you; but your doctor can't choose for you. That choice is yours to make and depends on what is important to you.

Can other people help with my decisions?

Yes. Clients often turn to their relatives and close friends for help in making medical decisions. These people can help you think about the choices you face. You can ask the doctors and nurses to talk with your relatives and friends. They can ask the doctors and nurses questions for you.

Can I choose a relative or friend to make health care decisions for me?

Yes. You may tell your doctor that you want someone else to make physical and mental health care decisions for you. Ask the doctor to list that person, as your healthcare "surrogate" in your medical record. The surrogate's control over your medical and mental health decisions is effective only during treatment, for your current illness or injury or, if you are in a medical facility, until you leave the facility.

What if I become too sick to make my own healthcare decisions?

If you haven't named a surrogate, your doctor will ask your closest available relative or friend to help decide what is best for you. Most of the time that works. But sometimes everyone doesn't agree about what to do. That's why it is helpful if you can say in advance what you want to happen if you cannot speak for yourself.

Do I have to wait until I am sick to express my wishes about healthcare?

No. In fact, it is better to choose before you get very sick or have to go into a hospital, nursing home or other healthcare facility. You can use an Advance Health Care Directive to say who you want to speak for you and what kind of treatments you want.

These documents are called 'advance' because you prepare one before physical and mental healthcare decisions need to be made. They are called 'directives' because they state who will speak on your behalf and what should be done. In California, the part of an advance directive you can use to appoint an agent to make healthcare decisions is called a Power of Attorney for Health Care. The part where you can express what you want done is called an Individual Health Care Instruction.

Who can make an advance directive?

You can if you are 18 years or older and are capable of making your own medical and mental health decisions. You do not need a lawyer.

Who can I name as my agent?

You can choose an adult relative or any other person you trust to speak for you when medical and mental health decisions must be made.

When does my agent begin making my medical and mental health decisions?

Usually, a healthcare agent will make decisions only after you lose the ability to make them yourself. But, if you wish, you can state in the Power of Attorney for Health Care that you want the agent to begin making decisions immediately.

How does my agent know what I would want?

After you choose your agent, talk to that person about what you want. Sometimes treatment decisions are hard to make, and it truly helps if your agent knows what you want. You can also write your wishes down in your advance directive.

What if I don't want to name an agent?

You can still write out your wishes in your advance directive, without naming an agent. You can say that you want to have your life continued as long as possible. Or you can say that you would not want treatment to continue your life. Also, you can express your wishes about the use of pain relief or any other type of medical or mental health treatment. Even if you have not filled out a written Individual Health Care Instruction, you can discuss your wishes with your doctor, and ask your doctor to list those wishes in your medical record. Or you can discuss your wishes with your family members or friends. But it will probably be easier to follow your wishes if you write them down.

What if I change my mind?

You can change or cancel your advance directive at any time as long as you can communicate your wishes. To change the person you want to make your physical and mental healthcare decisions, you must sign a statement or tell the doctor in charge of your care.

What happens when someone else makes decisions about my treatment?

The same rules apply to anyone who makes physical and mental healthcare decisions on your behalf a healthcare agent, a surrogate whose name you gave to your doctor, or a person appointed by a court to make decisions for you. All are required to follow your physical and mental Health Care Instructions or, if none, your general wishes about treatment, including stopping treatment. If your treatment wishes are not known, the surrogate must try to determine what is in your best interest. The people providing your physical and mental health care must follow the decisions of your agent or surrogate unless a requested treatment would be bad medical practice or ineffective in helping you. If this causes disagreement that cannot be worked out, the provider must make a reasonable effort to find another health care provider to take over your treatment.

Will I still be treated if I don't make an advance directive?

Absolutely. You will still get medical and mental health treatment. We just want you to know that if you become too sick to make decisions, someone else will have to make them for you.

Remember that:

» A Power of Attorney for Health Care lets you name an agent to make decisions for you. Your agent can make most medical and mental health decisions not just those about life sustaining treatment - when you can't speak for yourself. You can also let your agent make decisions earlier, if you wish.

» You can create an Individual Healthcare Instruction by writing down your wishes about health care or by talking with your doctor and asking the doctor to record your wishes in your medical file. If you know when you would or would not want certain types of treatment, an Instruction provides a good way to make your wishes clear to your doctor and to anyone else who may be involved in deciding about treatment on your behalf. These two types of Advance Healthcare Directives may be used together or separately.

How can I get more information about making an advance directive?

Ask your doctor, nurse, social worker, or healthcare provider to get more information for you. You can have a lawyer write an advance directive for you, or you can complete an advance directive by filling in the blanks on a form.



Notice of Availability of Language Assistance Services and Auxiliary Aids and Services

English

ATTENTION: If you need help in your language call 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Aids and services for people with disabilities, like documents in braille and large print, are also available. Call 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). These services are free of charge.

العربية (Arabic)

يرجى الانتباه: إذا احتجت إلى المساعدة بلغتك، فاتصل بـ 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). تتوفر أيضًا المساعدات والخدمات للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة، مثل المستندات المكتوبة بطريقة بريل والخط الكباري. اتصل بـ 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). هذه الخدمات مجانية.

Հայերեն (Armenian)

ՈՒՇԱԴՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ: Եթե Ձեզ օգնություն է հարկավոր Ձեր լեզվով, զանգահարեք 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711): Կան նաև օժանդակ միջոցներ ու ծառայություններ հաշմանդամություն ունեցող անձանց համար, օրինակ՝ Բրայլի գրատիպով ու խոշորատառ տպագրված նյութեր: Զանգահարեք 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711): Այդ ծառայություններն անվճար են:

ខ្មែរ (Cambodian)

ចំណាំ: បើអ្នក ត្រូវ ការជំនួយ ជាភាសា របស់អ្នក សូម ទូរស័ព្ទទៅលេខ 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711)។ ជំនួយ និង សេវាកម្ម សម្រាប់ ជនពិការ ដូចជាឯកសារសរសេរជាអក្សរផុស សម្រាប់ជនពិការភ្នែក ឬឯកសារសរសេរជាអក្សរពុម្ពធំ ក៏អាចរកបានផងដែរ។ ទូរស័ព្ទមកលេខ 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711)។ សេវាកម្មទាំងនេះមិនគិតថ្លៃឡើយ។

繁體中文 (Chinese)

请注意：如果您需要以您的母语提供帮助，请致电 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711)。另外还提供针对残疾人士的帮助和服务，例如盲文和需要较大字体阅读，也是方便取用的。请致电 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711)。这些服务都是免费的。

فارسی (Farsi)

تماس بگیرید. کمک‌ها و خدمات مخصوص افراد دارای معلولیت، مانند نسخه‌های خط بریل و چاپ با حروف بزرگ، نیز موجود است. با 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711) تماس بگیرید. این خدمات رایگان ارائه می‌شوند.

हिंदी (Hindi)

ध्यान दें: अगर आपको अपनी भाषा में सहायता की आवश्यकता है तो 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711) पर कॉल करें। अशक्तता वाले लोगों के लिए सहायता और सेवाएं, जैसे ब्रेल और बड़े प्रिंट में भी दस्तावेज़ उपलब्ध हैं। 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711) पर कॉल करें। ये सेवाएं नि: शुल्क हैं।

Hmoob (Hmong)

CEEB TOOM: Yog koj xav tau kev pab txhais koj hom lus hu rau 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Muaj cov kev pab txhawb thiab kev pab cuam rau cov neeg xiam oob qhab, xws li puav leej muaj ua cov ntawv su thiab luam tawm ua tus ntawv loj. Hu rau 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Cov kev pab cuam no yog pab dawb xwb.

日本語 (Japanese)

注意日本語での対応が必要な場合は 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711)へお電話ください。点字の資料や文字の拡大表示など、障がいをお持ちの方のためのサービスも用意しています。1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711)へお電話ください。これらのサービスは無料で提供しています。

한국어 (Korean)

유의사항: 귀하의 언어로 도움을 받고 싶으시면 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711) 번으로 문의하십시오. 점자나 큰 활자로 된 문서와 같이 장애가 있는 분들을 위한 도움과 서비스도 이용 가능합니다. 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711) 번으로 문의하십시오. 이러한 서비스는 무료로 제공됩니다.

ພາສາລາວ (Laotian)

ປະກາດ: ຖ້າທ່ານຕ້ອງການຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອໃນພາສາຂອງທ່ານໃຫ້ໃບທາດປີ 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). ຍັງມີຄວາມຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອແລະການບໍລິການສໍາລັບຄົນພິການ ເຊັ່ນເອກະສານທີ່ເປັນອັກສອນນູນແລະມີໂຕພິມໃຫຍ່ ໃຫ້ໃບທາດປີ 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). ການບໍລິການເຫຼົ່ານີ້ບໍ່ຕ້ອງເສຍຄ່າໃຊ້ຈ່າຍໃດໆ.

Mien

LONGC HNYOUV JANGX LONGX OC: Beiv taux meih qiemx longc mienh tengx faan benx meih nyei waac nor douc waac daaih lorx taux 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Liouh lorx jauv-louc tengx aengx caux nzie gong bun taux ninh mbuo wuaaic fangx mienh, beiv taux longc benx nzangc-pokc bun hluo mbiutc aengx caux aamz mborqv benx domh sou se mbenc nzoih bun longc. Douc waac daaih lorx 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Naaiv deix nzie weih gong-bou jauv-louc se benx wang-henh tengx mv zuqc cuotv nyaanh oc.

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi)

ਧਿਆਨ ਦਿਓ: ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਦਦ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). ਅਪਾਹਜ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਅਤੇ ਮੋਟੀ ਛਪਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼, ਵੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹਨ। ਕਾਲ ਕਰੋ 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). ਇਹ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਮੁਫਤ ਹਨ।

Русский (Russian)

ВНИМАНИЕ! Если вам нужна помощь на вашем родном языке, звоните по номеру 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (линия TTY: 711). Также предоставляются средства и услуги для людей с ограниченными возможностями, например документы крупным шрифтом или шрифтом Брайля. Звоните по номеру 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (линия TTY: 711). Такие услуги предоставляются бесплатно.

Español (Spanish)

ATENCIÓN: si necesita ayuda en su idioma, llame al 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). También ofrecemos asistencia y servicios para personas con discapacidades, como documentos en braille y con letras grandes. Llame al 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Estos servicios son gratuitos.

Tagalog (Filipino)

ATENSIYON: Kung kailangan mo ng tulong sa iyong wika, tumawag sa 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Mayroon ding mga tulong at serbisyo para sa mga taong may kapansanan, tulad ng mga dokumento sa braille at malaking print. Tumawag sa 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Libre ang mga serbisyonang ito.

ภาษาไทย (Thai)

โปรดทราบ: หากคุณต้องการความช่วยเหลือเป็นภาษาของคุณ กรุณาโทรศัพท์ไปที่หมายเลข 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711) นอกจากนี้ ยังพร้อมให้ความช่วยเหลือและบริการต่าง ๆ สำหรับบุคคลที่มีความพิการ เช่น เอกสารต่าง ๆ ที่เป็นอักษรเบรลล์และเอกสารที่พิมพ์ด้วยตัวอักษรขนาดใหญ่ กรุณาโทรศัพท์ไปที่หมายเลข 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711) ไม่มีค่าใช้จ่ายสำหรับบริการเหล่านี้.

Українська (Ukrainian)

УВАГА! Якщо вам потрібна допомога вашою рідною мовою, телефонуйте на номер 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Люди з обмеженими можливостями також можуть скористатися допоміжними засобами та послугами, наприклад, отримати документи, надруковані шрифтом Брайля та великим шрифтом. Телефонуйте на номер 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Ці послуги безкоштовні.

Tiếng Việt (Vietnamese)

CHÚ Ý: Nếu quý vị cần trợ giúp bằng ngôn ngữ của mình, vui lòng gọi số 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Chúng tôi cũng hỗ trợ và cung cấp các dịch vụ dành cho người khuyết tật, như tài liệu bằng chữ nổi Braille và chữ khổ lớn (chữ hoa). Vui lòng gọi số 1-800-870-8786 or 1-707-565-6900 (TTY: 711). Các dịch vụ này đều miễn phí.