



Advance Health-Care Directive

An **Advance Health-Care Directive** is a plan that tells others about your medical choices. It is used during an **emergency** so doctors know what treatments you want or do not want. It is used when your illness or injury is so serious that you cannot make and communicate your medical choices. You can list a **surrogate decision-maker** on your Advance Health-Care Directive. A surrogate decision-maker is a person you trust to make health decisions *for* you. If you do not list a surrogate decision-maker, the law names the person who would be best to make decisions for you.

Where can I use this support in my life?

The table below shows examples of how you can use an Advance Health-Care Directive.

Money

An Advance Health-Care Directive cannot be used when making decisions about your money.

Healthcare

With an Advance Health-Care Directive you can:

- Name a person to make medical decisions for you
- List your preference for organ donation
- List your life support or end-of-life treatment plans

School

An Advance Health-Care Directive cannot be used when making decisions about your schooling.

Personal life

An Advance Health-Care Directive cannot be used when making decisions about your personal life.

Housing

An Advance Health-Care Directive cannot be used when making decisions about your housing.

Post-secondary life

An Advance Health-Care Directive cannot be used when making decisions about your post-secondary life.

Additional information and a full list of references are available at <https://www.delawareautismnetwork.org/resources/supported-decision-making/>

Steinbrecher, A., Ferrara, N., Mallory, S., & Legal Support Choices Project Advisory Group (2025). *Advance health-care directive*. University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies.

More information about Advance Health-Care Directive

Who is the decision-maker?

If you have an Advance Health-Care Directive, someone else makes decisions for you in an emergency. You can say who you want to be your decision-maker.

Does an Advance Health-Care Directive require a court hearing?

No, a court hearing is generally not required when creating an Advance Health-Care Directive. You can complete this on your own or with the support of a healthcare professional.

Can an Advance Health-Care Directive be changed? If yes, by who?

Yes, you can change your Advance Health-Care Directive at any time, either verbally or in writing. To change your Advance Health-Care Directive, you can create a new document with your updated medical choices. Next, sign and date the updated form and share it with your healthcare providers and supporters.

Where can I go to learn more about Advance Health-Care Directive?

You have choices when it comes to legal support when you turn 18. An Advance Health-Care Directive is a choice that is available in Delaware. Other states may have different rules or may not offer the same legal support choices as Delaware.

Visit <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dsaapd/advance1.html> to learn more about Advance Health-Care Directives and to download a copy of the Advance Health-Care Directive form. These forms are available in English and Spanish.

This project is funded by the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council using federal funds. The opinions do not necessarily represent the views of the Council or the Administration.

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Last updated: 01/2026