

HEALTH CARE PROXIES & LIVING WILLS OFFER LIFETIME PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES

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INTRODUCTION

Today's advanced medical technology often results in individuals being subjected to various invasive medical procedures, particularly life support systems which may serve no purpose other than to prolong the dying process. Every competent adult individual, however, has the right to state in advance his or her medical treatment preferences. This advanced medical directive may be most effectively made through two documents: the Health Care Proxy and Living Will.

THE HEALTH CARE PROXY

Q: *What Is A Health Care Proxy?*

A: A Health Care Proxy is a document which allows a competent, adult individual (the "Principal"), to appoint another individual as "agent" or "attorney in fact" to make medical decisions in the event the Principal loses his or her decision-making capacity or is no longer able to decide for himself regarding the implementation of any type of medical treatment. The Health Care Proxy can be general, and apply to all medical treatment decisions, or the Principal may wish to limit the Agent's authority by imposing limitations or defining specific instructions.