

Guide to Selecting Healthcare Agents

If you are having difficulty deciding who should be your healthcare agent, this guide is for you. Your best agent is not always your spouse or oldest child. Your agent should be someone who will be a strong advocate for you. In Illinois you can only name one agent at a time and agents act consecutively not together.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN SELECTING YOUR HEALTHCARE AGENT

1. Would this person be willing to speak on your behalf?
2. Would this person be able to act on your wishes and separate his/her own feelings from yours?
3. Does this person live close by or could he or she travel to be at your side if needed?
4. Does this person know you well and understand what is important to you?
5. Could this person handle the responsibility?
6. Will this person talk with you now about sensitive issues and will he/she listen to your wishes?
7. Will this person likely be available long into the future?
8. Would this person be able to handle conflicting opinions between family members, friends, and medical personnel?
9. Can this person be a strong advocate in the face of an unresponsive doctor or institution?

ONCE YOU HAVE DECIDED ON SOMEONE YOU FEEL WOULD BE A PROPER HEALTHCARE AGENT MAKE SURE TO DO THE FOLLOWING:

1. Talk to your healthcare agent about the qualifications listed above.
2. Ask permission to name him or her as your healthcare agent.
3. Discuss your healthcare wishes, values, and fears.
4. Make sure your healthcare agent has a copy of your advanced directives.
5. Tell family members and close friends who you have chosen.