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Your Health Care Proxy - Make It Work Harder For You

Signing your health care proxy is just the beginning. Don't stop there if you want it to protect you to the fullest. First, speak to the person whom you have selected to serve as your agent. Tell your agent that you have appointed them to this important role. Describe the circumstances under which they will be required to act on your behalf and explain the decisions that you will want them to make. Let them read the document. Make sure they have no misgivings about the decisions they may be required to make. Next, give a copy of the document to your primary care physician and other health care providers. If you are scheduled for a medical procedure, bring a copy with you. Finally, don't fill out a new health care proxy unless you want to revoke the old one. If an emergency arises and you are taken to the hospital, explain that you have a valid health care proxy at home and that arrangements will be made to supply it soon. Ask a friend or family member to bring a copy. Call your attorney and ask that it be sent by facsimile. Do not let the emergency room or admitting staff convince you to complete a new document. Documents that are completed in the hospital setting, under pressure, when you are awaiting treatment are not the product of thoughtful planning and do not necessarily reflect your wishes.