

## Advance Care Planning – What Is An Agent’s Role?

It’s impossible to know which medical treatment choices you might face in the future. What if you aren’t able to make these decisions for yourself? A durable power of attorney for health care lets you name an agent to carry out your wishes. This happens only if you can’t express your wishes yourself.

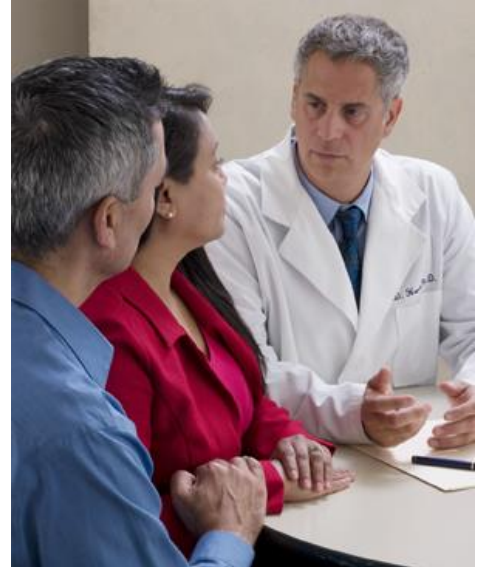
### Before choosing an agent, think about these key questions

- Will he or she be willing to take on the responsibility?
- Does she or he know what your treatment wishes are?
- Will he or she listen to you talk about what your treatment wishes are?
- Can he or she make the decision you want even if he or she disagree with it?
- Can he or she make a medical decision in a stressful situation?

### An agent’s duty

Your agent’s duty is to see that your wishes are followed.

- If your wishes aren’t known, your agent should try to decide what you want.
- Your agent’s choices come before anyone else’s wishes for you.
- A durable power of attorney for health care does not give your agent control over your money. Your agent also can’t be made to pay your bills.



It's a good idea to write down your wishes in an advance care plan and give a copy to your agent.

### Find out what your agent can do

Restrictions on what an agent can and cannot do vary by state. Check your state laws. In most states your agent can:

- Choose or refuse life-sustaining and other medical treatment on your behalf.
- Consent to and then stop treatment if your condition doesn’t improve.
- Access and release your medical records.
- Request an autopsy and donate your organs, unless you’ve stated otherwise on your advance directive.