

### **What is an Advance Health Care Directive?**

An Advance Health Care Directive has replaced the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care. It allows you to give another person who you trust the power to make medical decisions for you when you are incapacitated. This person may only have legal authority to make decisions about your medical care if you become unable to make these decisions for yourself. It also allows you to give instructions about your health care. Your health care providers and your health care agent must follow your lawful instructions.

### **Is an Advance Health Care Directive different from a “living will”?**

The Advance Health Care Directive has also replaced living wills in California. It allows you to do more than a living will, which only can state your desire not to receive life-sustaining treatment if you are terminally ill or permanently unconscious. An Advance Health Care Directive allows you to state your wishes about refusing or accepting life-sustaining treatment in any situation. Unlike a living will, an Advance Health Care Directive also can be used to state your desires about your health care in any situation in which you are unable to make your own decisions, not just when you are in a coma or are terminally ill.

### **Is an Advance Health Care Directive different from a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care?**

The Advance Health Care Directive has replaced the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care as the document for appointing a health care agent in California. The Advance Health Care Directive allows you to not only to appoint an agent, you may state your health care wishes in the Advance Health Care Directive form.

An Advance Health Care Directive is available on this site for download subject to this website's general disclaimer and the other warnings stated on the form. Make sure that the form has been properly signed, dated, and either notarized or witnessed by two qualified individuals (the form includes instructions about who can and cannot be a witness). Keep the original in a safe place where your loved ones can find it quickly. Give copies of the completed form to the people you have appointed as your agent and alternate agent(s), to your doctor(s) and health plan, and to family members or anyone else who is likely to be called if there is a medical emergency. You should tell these people to present a copy of the form at the request of your health care providers or emergency medical personnel.

Take a copy of the form with you if you are going to be admitted to a hospital, nursing home or other health care facility. Copies of the completed form can be relied upon by your agent and doctors as though they were the originals.

### **What if I change my mind after completing an Advance Health Care Directive?**

You can revoke or change an Advance Health Care Directive at any time. To revoke the entire form, including the appointment of your agent, you must inform your treating health care provider personally or in writing. Completing a new Advance Health Care Directive will only revoke previous directives if it so states. In addition, if you revoke or

change your directive, you should notify every person or facility that has a copy of your prior directive and provide them with a new one.

You should complete a new form if you want to name a different person as your agent or make other changes. However, if you need only to update the address or telephone numbers of your agent or alternate agent(s), you may write in the new information, and initial and date the change. Of course, you should make copies or otherwise ensure that those who need this new contact information will have it.

You should make a list of the people and institutions to whom you give a copy of the form so you will know whom to contact if you revoke the Advance Health Care Directive, update contact information, or make a new one.