What's it All About?

Under federal law, you have the ability to make major decisions about your health care.

Any foster youth, **those of you 18 and older**, can choose who will make medical decisions for you if you can't make them for yourself.

You may be wondering, **"Do I need to think about this now?"** Yes! You don't know when you may need it. It could be tomorrow or years from now.

THINK ABOUT IT . . .

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BEFORE WE MOVE ON . . .
You may decide you don't need this information because you have a relative that can make medical decisions for you if you are too sick or injured. But if you aren't sure, OR if you don't have a relative that can do this, OR if you don't want them to.....you need to know your options.

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To put this in place, you will need to complete a document called a.....

DURABLE POWER OF OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE

This document lets you identify who will make medical decisions for you when you can't. You also get to say what kind of medical decisions they will make. Other names for this type of document include:

- Health Care Proxy.
- Health Care Power of Attorney.
- Medical Power of Attorney.

Choose the document you like best.

If you decide to get a **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**, here are the steps to take.

FIRST

Determine your medical decisions.

It is important that you REALLY think about these things!

You might want to get the form and look it over first.

SECOND

Choose your patient advocate

A **patient advocate** is the person you chose to make the medical decisions listed on the **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**.

You can choose anyone, but they must be 18 or older. Choose wisely!

Oh, one more thing → if they tell you yes and then decide later they don't want to help, it is okay. You just need to do a new form. You can change your mind too! You can decide at any time to choose a different advocate**....but don't forget to get a new document.**

THIRD

Complete a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care

- Get the form you like the best.
- Fill in your information.
- Choose your patient advocate.
- Choose your two witnesses.
- Make sure everyone signs it.
- Give copies to your doctor, your advocate, your worker and yourself!

Here is an EXAMPLE

DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE

I, _____ (your name)

designate _____ (their name) as my patient advocate.

My patient advocate has power to make decisions about my care, custody and medical treatment. They can:

- (One of your medical decisions.)
- (Another of your medical decisions.)

My specific wishes are _____

_____

Everything listed here are my medical decisions and I expect them to be carried out.

_____ (your signature)

Patient Advocate Acceptance

_____(patient advocate signature)

Witnesses

_____ (witness 1 signature)

_____ (witness 2 signature)

You sign the form and your patient advocate has to sign their name too. Their signature means they agree to do what you have on the form.

You also need 2 witnesses! Some people can't be a witness, like a family member, your doctor, anyone who works with your doctor, and your patient advocate.

But I'm not sick!

Well that IS good news! Unfortunately getting sick is a reality for everyone, and that's what we need to talk about.

First of all, Congratulations! You are now an adult. You have the ability to make major decisions about your health. You can make your own doctor appointments, take yourself to the doctor, and ask all the important questions.

But what if you can't? What if you get really sick before you can ask questions—so sick you don't know what's going on? Or what if you get hurt in an accident? Who will ask questions for you? Who will make decisions for you?

You can decide who will do these things for you BEFORE they happen. This person is called a **patient advocate** and these type of decisions, when put in writing, are called **advance directives**.

Sound scary? Don't worry, adults make these type of decisions all the time.

INTERESTED? Take a look inside.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

GO TO

Foster Youth in Transition
website at
www.michigan.gov/fyit
for answers.

GO TO

The State Bar of Michigan
They have an example and even more answers! Their website address is
http://www.michbar.org/
Look for **advance directives** or you can just use this link:
http://www.michbar.org/elderlaw/adpamphlet.cfm

These are some of the places you can **go to** for a **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**:

- Your doctor's office.
- Hospitals.
- Your health care provider (the people that give you health insurance).

Quantity: 3,000
Cost: $435.37 (.15 ea.)
Authority: P.L. 111-148

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DHS-Pub-161 (10-10)

A FOSTER YOUTH'S GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR HEALTH CARE EMERGENCIES

DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE

STATE OF MICHIGAN
Department of Human Services