



My Voice

Preparing for Future Health Care Decision Making

With Health Care Directive and Proxy Appointment Templates

SHA Advance Care Planning Program
Supporting Saskatchewan
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CS-PIER-0053
SEPTEMBER 2023



[saskhealthauthority.ca](https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca)

**The Saskatchewan Health Authority
supports any person who wants to plan for their health care
now and in the future, so those wishes can be known, understood,
and respected when they cannot speak for themselves.**

The purpose of this workbook is to help you make your own health care directive and/or appoint a proxy(ies). You will find information you need to help you put everything together.

There are some things to think about:

- How to make informed choices about health care decisions that are right for you
- How to appoint a proxy
- How and when to have conversations with your friends, family, and your doctor.

Additional tools and resources are available to help you decide what is most important to you and what brings you joy.

You do not need to complete this all at once. It is important to take your time and think about what is important to you and what you want others to know about you. You will want to share copies of your health care directive with your proxy(ies) and health care team.

Remember to review your information as your health status changes or as your life circumstances change.

This publication is intended for information purposes only and should not be relied on as providing specific health care or other professional advice.

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Planning for your future health care is making arrangements while you are healthy for a time when you may need help because of a medical emergency, illness, injury, or disability. This can include making a health care directive or appointing a proxy.

Advance Care Planning is a process of reflection and conversation that may or may not result in you creating a health care directive and/or appointing a proxy for your future health care, if you have a medical crisis or are not able to speak for yourself. Your health care directive and proxy will speak for you when you cannot.

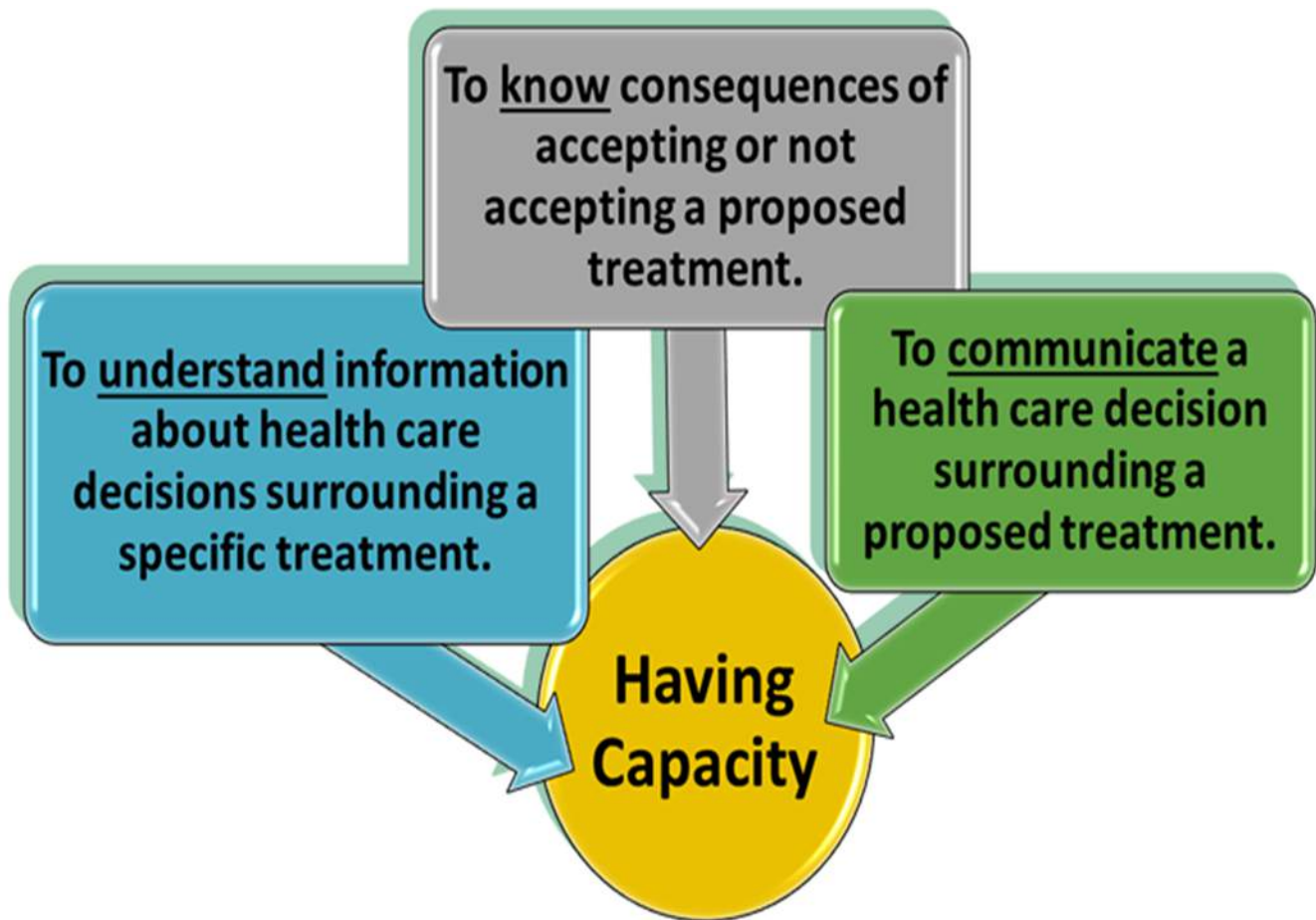
Making a health care directive when you still have the ability to make decisions helps you prepare for your future health care. You are preparing in case there is a time when you become too sick or hurt to make choices yourself. You are the only person that can make your health care directive and/or appoint someone to be your proxy. You can only do this when you have capacity.

A health care directive is where you write your instructions for future medical decisions on a template or a piece of paper, sign and date it to make it legal. You might want to include information about what is most important to you and how you want to live your life. Health care directives have an impact on decision making around the types of medical treatments or interventions that best fit with what is important to you and the goals you have for your life. This information will help your substitute decision maker(s) and health care team know you better and know what treatments are best for you if you are unable to make your own decisions. You can ask someone you trust the most to make health care choices for you when you cannot. This is what it means to **appoint a proxy**, (a type of substitute decision maker). You make your health care directive and appoint a proxy by writing it down, signing, and dating it. This becomes a legal document when you sign and date it yourself.

You can write your health care directive and proxy appointment on any template or write them out on a piece of paper. You can include your proxy as part of your health care directive or do it separately. These documents are legal as long as **you** sign and date them. There are health care directive and a proxy templates included in the workbook for you to use (on pages 24 to 29). You can make changes to your directive and proxy appointment at any time as long as you have capacity to make your own decisions. These documents do not expire until you verbally revoke them or write new ones.

Complete Your Health Care Directive when you have Capacity:

Completing a Health Care Directive is legal in Saskatchewan. All Saskatchewan residents who are 16 years of age and older can make their own health care directive, make changes to it, or revoke the directive at any time while they have capacity.



When should I start the process of advance care planning?

Ideally

When you are young, healthy, and before you get sick is the best time to appoint a proxy and talk about what is important to you, how you want to live, what you value, what makes you happy, and what brings you joy.

Importantly

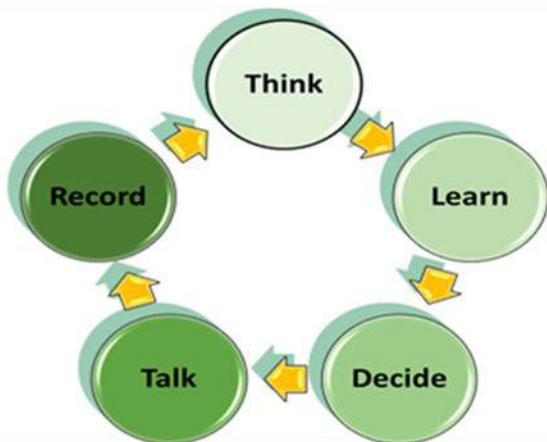
As you age, or become sick with a chronic disease or terminal illness, or your life circumstances change it is a good time to appoint a proxy, create a health care directive, and talk with the people you trust the most.

Absolutely

As a chronic disease or terminal illness progresses or you become seriously ill it is absolutely the time to have conversations about future decision making. Consider appointing a proxy and creating a health care directive. Have conversations about how you want to live and what a quality of life means to you with those you trust the most and your health care team.

This is not a one and done thing. Rather it is many conversations about what is important to you over your life time as your health changes and life circumstances change.

STEPS TO MAKING YOUR HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE



It does not matter how you choose to begin. The most important thing is to start thinking and talking about what matters most to you.

Think about what makes you happy, what you value, and what gives you joy.

Learn about your health and what medical choices you may need to think about making in the future.

Decide who you want to speak for you about your health care decisions when you cannot.

Talk about what is important to you with your doctor and anyone who will be speaking for you about your health care choices.

Record your wishes by writing out your health care directive and appointing your proxy. These become legal when you sign and date them. Remember to give copies to those you trust the most and who will be speaking for you when you cannot.

THINK about what matters the most to **you**

Here are some things to think about to help you decide what matters most to you:



YOUR VALUES, BELIEFS, AND JOYS

What makes us happy and brings us joy is reflected in our values and beliefs. Our personal values and beliefs are the foundation for how we make decisions, how we decide if we had a good day, how we want to live, and may directly influence the decisions we make. Think about what makes you happy every day and how you like to live your life. Make a list of these things below. This step will help you write your **What Matters Most to Me** statement below.

It can be difficult to think of the things that matter to you or what you think is very important. Here are some things to help you get started if you feel stuck. Write down the things that make you happy and what brings you joy every day. This will be your **Value and Joy** list.

Things that make you happy and bring you joy:

- What makes you happy?
- What brings you pleasure and joy?
- What makes you smile?
- How do you like to spend your time?
- What are your hobbies and interests?
- What daily activities are really important to you? (for example, how you like to start or end your day; coffee with friends; daily walks; reading the newspaper; attending social events)
- What makes each day meaningful?
- Who do you like spending time with?
- Do you have cultural, religious, or spiritual practices or beliefs you like to do each day?

Things that add to the quality of your life:

- Being able to take care of myself and be independent in my own home.
- Choosing my own clothing.
- My first cup of morning coffee.
- Spending time with my dog/cat/pet
- Participating in my cultural/religious/spiritual activities
- Being able to participate in community events
- Being physically strong and able to exercise or go for walks
- Working in my garden
- Spending time cooking a good meal
- Being able to feed myself
- Sharing love with my family
- Being aware of friends and family and being able to have a conversation with them and spend time with them.

Things I want my friends and family to know about me:

When you have your **Value and Joy List** complete, it is important to include things you might worry about:

Some suggestions around things to consider are:

- Being able to live if I get really sick
- Where will I live if I cannot go home
- What if I cannot communicate
- How will my family go on without me
- I worry about finances and paying for care
- What if I cannot feed myself
- Not able to return home
- Not being able to be independent
- My family’s feelings if I get really sick
- Coping with a lot of pain
- I do not want my family to feel obligated
- Not being able to get dressed or bath myself
- Living in long term care
- Not able to recognize your family
- Being on a breathing machine
- Medical treatments that will not help me

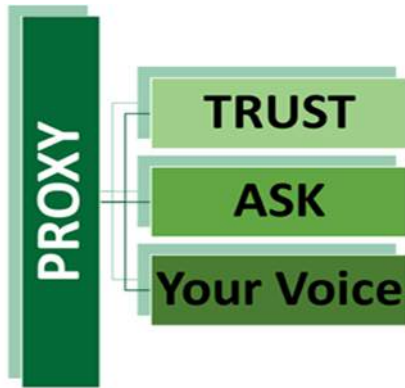
List below:

Difficult feelings about choices: The answers to the questions below are important to share with your proxy and/or include in your health care directive. Your proxy might feel uncomfortable with your choices about how you want to live. It may be difficult if they need to make health care decisions for you if they do not know what is important to you. That is normal. Talking with your proxy about your answers to these and other questions will help them know what is important to you when they need to speak for you. Some things to talk with your proxy about and write in your instructions might include but not be limited to:

- What would you be willing to go through for the chance to live longer? If so how much?
- What if you need someone to care for you like: to feed you; dress you; to help you go to the bathroom?
- What if you cannot recognize or have a conversation with friends and family?
- What if you cannot go home?
- Would you agree to a tube feed if you cannot eat or swallow? Would you agree to a tube feed for a short time or long time?
- What if you needed to be on a ventilator for a long time or permanently?

Additional tools and resources can be found on the [SHA Advance Care Planning](#) Program page.

DECIDE who you want to speak for you



Proxies can work together or separately.

Jointly: Proxies work together to make choices. If they cannot agree, there are rules about what happens.

Succession: The first person in the list makes choices until they are no longer able or willing to.

A proxy is someone 18 and older whom you trust and ask to make your medical decisions for you when you cannot. They become your voice when you cannot speak for yourself.

Ideally, you ask someone to be your proxy when you are healthy and able to make decisions for yourself. **Only you** can appoint your proxy. If you do not do this before you lose capacity, the opportunity may be lost.

It is best to ask the person before you appoint them. Once they agree, write it down, sign and date the form, and give them a copy. Keep your copy in a safe place and tell them where it is.

Your proxy must make decisions based on:

- Your instructions (in a health care directive or what you have told them or others about your wishes)
- What they think is best for you (if they do not know what you would want)
- What is important to you and how you want to live
- Your proxy must make decisions based on what you have written in your health care directive, what they know about what you would want, and what is in your best interests, not what they would want for you, or would want for themselves.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority's [Appointing a Proxy](#) has some helpful information to consider about when appointing a proxy. You can have a copy sent to you by the Advance Care Planning team.

If you are not able to make your own medical decisions, your proxy will be asked to make your health care decisions. If you do not have proxy or a Personal Guardian (a court appointment), your health care team will follow the **Nearest Relative** list to find a family member to make decisions for you.

The Nearest Relative list according to the legislation is in the following order:

- Legal spouse or common law partner
- Child
- Parent
- Siblings
- Grandparents
- Grandchildren
- Aunts/Uncles
- Niece/Nephew

Criterion as per the legislation:
Must be 18 and older
Willing, available, and capable
Eldest in each category
Bloodline
Legally adopted
No cousins or blended family members

LEARN

Gather your information and know your facts. Advance care planning is all about you, your health, and what is right for you.

Learn about your family health history; is there anything you want to learn about? (heart disease, diabetes, dementia, cancer etc.)

Learn about the laws for health care directives and appointing a proxy, and what the rights and responsibilities are for yourself, your proxy/SDM, and your health care team.

Do you want to create your health care directive or do you want a lawyer to do it? (You do not need a lawyer to complete a health care directive. There is a template on pages 18 to 23).

Is there important cultural, religious, or spiritual information you want everyone to know?

Is there important information you want to include? Are you curious and look everything up or are you content knowing just enough. How much information do you want to know ahead of time: Do you want information a bit at a time or all at once? How much information do you want your family to have?

How will treatment impact your quality of life and how you want to live your life now and in the future?

We cannot know everything about what our future medical treatments may be. It is important to ask questions, so you are informed about your health and possible future treatments.

TALK: The more you talk the more they will know.

The more **you** talk with the people you trust the most the more they will know about what is important to **you** and how **you** want to live your life.

We can think or assume those we spend the most time with, live with, and trust the most know us the best... know what we would want... Is that the case for you?

If you are reading this online, click to watch and scroll down the page to the title ***Love is not Enough***:
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=australia+advacne+care+planing

Use the [What Matters Most to Me Workbook](#) to write down your information so it is easy to share with your proxy and trusted people.

Make an appointment with the people you want to be involved in your health care.

Be clear about what is important to you. Different words have different meanings to different people.

Explain what a good day looks like to you.

Explain what you think is unacceptable to you, or worry about.

Talk about what is important to you and how you like to live your life.

Do not rush: Take your time.

The Advance Care Planning team can send you a copy of the [What Matters Most to Me Workbook](#) or you can click on the link to print your own.

WRITE your plan down.

Write your thoughts down.

Remember **only you** can make your own health care directive and appoint a proxy.

We might think our friends and family already know what is important to us and know what to do in a medical crisis: What if they do not?

For example, you may have said “I don’t want any tubes” or “I don’t want to live on a machine”. What do these statements really mean to you?

If something happened to you today, would your most trusted people know what you would want?

Health Care Directives can be specific or general:

Specific Directives: If your directive provides direction for specific or anticipated circumstances and it will be followed specifically for the indicated situation(s).

General Directives: If your directive does not clearly anticipate or give direction for specific circumstances, which exist or may be anticipated, it is considered a general directive and will be used as a guide.

You may prefer to tell your proxy and family what your wishes are instead of writing them down. Writing your instructions helps people know exactly what you want. It makes it easier for your wishes to be shared with the health care team members who may not know you.

We may think those who we have shared our wishes with will remember what we said about what is important to us and our life goals, but when any of us is faced with a stressful situation we can forget what someone said.

BENEFITS OF HAVING AN HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE and PROXY APPOINTMENT

By **planning ahead** you remain involved in your health care, even when you cannot speak for yourself.

Providing clear instructions for your proxy, health care team, and others who may be involved in making decisions for you will help them be your voice when you can no longer speak for yourself. This will ensure you receive medical care that supports how you want to live, what is most important to you, and that is based on your beliefs, values, and traditions.

The benefits of planning ahead:

- Avoiding medical treatments that you do not want.
- **Reducing emotional distress** on those closest to you if they are the ones making decisions for you.
- Those making decisions for you can be **confident** if they need to make medical choices.

This is a lot to talk about.

Remember, although it is difficult to think about future illness or injury, talking about your **beliefs, values, and goals for living well**, and **What Matters to Me** statement will help those who will be speaking for you make informed medical decisions when you cannot.

Answers to Other Questions You May Have

1. Is my Health Care Directive legal?

Yes. A written health care directive and proxy appointment give clear direction regarding your health care wishes and who you want to make decisions if you are not able to. These documents must be signed and dated by you to be legal in Saskatchewan. They carry considerable weight and health care providers must honour it in all but exceptional circumstances. (see *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act, 2015*).

2. What are the health care provider's legal obligations?

The *Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act, 2015*, is the provincial legislation that directs health care providers to follow health care directives in Saskatchewan. A health care directive is your voice when you cannot speak for yourself. Health care professionals will do their best to follow your health care directive where possible. It is important to understand that the choices you make now for the future may not be medically indicated if you become very ill. Your doctor will consider your wishes, but will not order care or treatments for you that are not medically indicated or appropriate for your condition.

3. My children/spouse do not agree with my carefully chosen health care wishes...what now?

Talking about your health care choices and wishes with your proxy, family, and doctor provides clarification if you are unable to make your own decisions. However, if it causes disagreements, you may want to consider changing who you have asked to be your proxy. Your proxy should be someone you trust who will honour your wishes when acting as your proxy. Saskatchewan law requires that this legally appointed substitute decision maker follow your wishes and cannot have your instructions changed.

4. What happens in an emergency when my substitute decision maker (Proxy, Personal Guardian, nearest relative) is not available?

In emergencies there may not be time to locate and consult the detailed instructions in your health care directive. Lifesaving treatments may be started, but they can be stopped if it is learned that this is not what you wanted. **Remember**, substitute decision makers do not need to be physically present to make medical decisions.

5. What if I leave Saskatchewan? Will other provinces or other countries honour my healthcare plan?

As health care directives are recognized by common law in Canada, we suggest you confirm your directive will be honoured anywhere you travel. The best way to ensure that you receive the type of care you want is to take a copy of your health care directive with you whenever you travel and give one to your traveling companion.

Create Your Own Health Care Directive

You can use the following pages (or any other form or template) to create your own health care directive and/or appoint a proxy. It is legal in Saskatchewan, as long as you sign and date the documents. If you need more room to write, you can add additional pages and sign and date them too.

You can choose to have these documents witnessed, but witnesses cannot be your proxy or your proxy's spouse. If you do not want to create a health care directive or appoint a proxy at the same time you can choose to do one and not the other. As long as you sign and date the pages you choose to complete the documents are legal.

Once you are done, give a copy of your health care directive to the anyone you want to have a copy. Make sure to include your proxy, anyone who may help you if there is an emergency in your home, and keep a copy in a safe place in your home. Tell your proxy where your copies are located.

Your health care directive and/or proxy appointment documents can be uploaded to your My Sask Health Record if you wish. The information will be stored in your health record but is not accessible by health care professionals at this time. EHealth is working to make that possible in the near future. If you are going to scan your directive, **only scan the pages that make up your directive (pages 18 to 23 only)**. Remember, the first half of this workbook is to provide information and is not a part of your directive.

You decide if your directive will be general or specific. Choose the one that best fits your current health situation. For example, a general health care directive is intended to be used as a guide for your substitute decision makers and health care team to make medical decisions for you when you are unable to make them for yourself. A general directive is appropriate for those individuals who are in good health without a specific diagnosis, or chronic illness, or terminal diagnosis. For example, an individual who is in good general health and is not anticipating specific medical treatments would likely create a general health care directive. These directives are common for unanticipated medical emergencies or crisis situations. Specific health care directives are best to be used when a person has a specific diagnosis and knows the type of treatments they may need to have in the future. For example, a person with heart disease requiring a pacemaker or someone with COPD requiring intubation as a form of treatment in the future. They might choose to include these types of situations in their directive.

My Health Care Directive

This section is designed to be separated from the rest of the workbook, photocopied, and given to your doctor, proxy, and any other health or legal professionals you want to have this information. Please read each page carefully, initial, sign, date, and have witness where indicated.

IMPORTANT NOTE: By completing this directive I revoke any and all previously completed Health Care Directives I completed before this date. By completing this directive I am creating a new directive.

This is the Health Care Directive of:

My first name: _____ Middle initial(s): _____

Last name: _____

My date of birth: (month/day/Year) _____

My Saskatchewan Hospitalization Number: _____

My address: _____

My home phone number: _____

My cell phone number: _____

My work phone number: _____

My e-mail address: _____

My Family Practitioner: _____

Your health care directive is based on your **“What Matters to Me”** statement. You may want to include things you worry about as well. These lists will help your proxy, substitute decision maker(s), and health care team know what is important to you. **Remember** to review these often as these may change as your health changes, as you age, and as life circumstances change.

My **“What Matters to Me”** Statement:
Finish this sentence: What matters to me is....

My Things I worry about List: Include things from your list created earlier in the workbook:

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness Name: _____

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

MY HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE

What I understand about my health is: (Example: diagnosis, family history, age, mobility, medications, frailty etc.)

Use the chart below to indicate the situations, type of care, treatment options, and outcomes you are comfortable with/willing to accept or live with. Your substitute decision makers and health care team will use this information when you are not able to make your own decisions to make health care decisions for you. To make this directive legal sign and date the bottom of the page when you are done. (Go back to your What Matters statement)

In the following situation(s)	I want my care to focus on	I am comfortable accepting the following treatments	I want treatment(s) to stop in the following situations	I consider the following treatments/ outcomes unacceptable

At any time I lose capacity I am willing to accept clinically and medically appropriate decisions that my substitute decision maker and health care team will make using the shared decision making process.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Witness Name: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

Completing the Proxy Appointment Form (see page 22 for form)

A proxy:

- is a person you trust to ask to be your voice to make medical decisions for you when you are not able to speak for yourself;
- can be anyone you trust the most to advocate for you;
- can be a close friend or family member;
- must be 18 years of age or older; and
- must agree to be your proxy.

You should talk about what matters most to you with your proxy(ies) and give them a copy of your **health care directive** if you have one so they will be prepared to make the best decision about the type of care you would want or not want should you lose the ability to make your own health care decisions.

You can complete this form if you are able to make your own decisions and have capacity to complete it. Usually a witness is not required for a proxy appointment to be legal.

If you are unable to create or sign the form yourself, you can tell someone to sign it on your behalf. To do this, you tell the person to sign and date it for you, have a second person sign and date it as a witness in front of you.

Remember witnesses cannot be who you name as a proxy(ies) or their spouse.

You can choose more than one proxy and you can ask they act jointly or in succession.

Acting **jointly** means proxies work together to make decisions. If they cannot agree, majority rules, and if no majority, the first person you have listed will be the decision maker.

If you want to appoint proxies to act in **succession**, the healthcare team will follow the order you have listed them in starting with the first person in the list makes choices until they are no longer able or willing to act as your proxy.

Give a copy of the completed proxy form to your proxy(ies,) your healthcare team (doctor, clinic, hospital), and those closest to you who you want to have this information.

For more information contact the SHA Advance Care Planning Program Serving Saskatchewan with offices in Regina and Saskatoon

Phone: **1-833-544-2255**

or

Email: **advancecareplanningprgm@saskhealthauthority.ca**

Available as a stand alone form—SHA 0326



CS-PIER 0053

IMPORTANT NOTE:

By completing this proxy appointment I revoke any and all previously completed proxy appointment forms.

You may appoint one person, or more than one person in case the first person you appoint is not able, willing, or available at some point in the future. Proxy(ies) may be appointed to act jointly or in succession.

I _____ having attained the age of 16, select this/these person (s) to be my proxy(ies) to act successively or jointly (***initial only one***) when I am unable to make my own medical decisions.

1.	Name:	Relationship:
	Home Phone:	Cell Phone:
	Work Phone:	
	Address:	
	Email:	
2.	Name:	Relationship:
	Home Phone:	Cell Phone:
	Work Phone:	
	Address:	
	Email:	
3.	Name:	Relationship:
	Home Phone:	Cell Phone:
	Work Phone:	
	Address:	
	Email:	

Name:	
Signed:	Date:
Witness Name: (Required if person cannot sign document. See page 21 for instructions)	
Signed:	Date:

Available as a stand alone form—SHA 0326





ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION: A Personal Choice

Organ and tissue donation can provide a lasting memory in your honor and can save many lives. Life saving organs may include: heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, and bowels. Tissue donation enhances the lives of Saskatchewan residents, including vision saving or restoring eye surgeries. In Saskatchewan, you can be a deceased organ and/or tissue donor, a living kidney donor, or donate your body for the purpose of science through the bequeathal program.

Deceased organ donation happens when a patient is on a Critical Care Unit. People with a life-threatening illness or injury may qualify for organ donation. Donation is a part of end-of-life discussions. The Saskatchewan Health Authority’s (SHA) Donation Program is contacted at the time the proxy and family need to make a decision about organ donation. Anyone can ask the healthcare team on the Critical Care Unit questions about organ and tissue donation and they will contact the SHA Donation Program to provide more information.

Deceased tissue donation is offered throughout the province and you do not need to be admitted to a hospital for this to occur. If you would like more information regarding tissue donation you can contact by emailing SHA.donationprogram@saskhealthauthority.ca or by calling 1(306)655-0315 for Saskatoon and Northern Regions and donationprogram.regina@saskhealthauthority.ca or 1(306)766-3591 for Regina and Southern Regions.

The Living Kidney Program helps living Saskatchewan residents to donate a kidney. For more information you can email SHAlivingdonation@saskhealthauthority.ca or call 1(306)-655-5054 for the Saskatoon and North Region and 1(306)766-6477 and for the Regina and South Region.

If you want to donate your body for science you will need to contact the body bequeathment program through the University of **Saskatchewan Body Bequeathal program**. For more information you can go to the [Bequeathal Program](#) web site or call 306-966-4075 to see if this is right for you.

If you want to **be an organ donor** talk with your proxy(ies) and family to let them know this is important to you and register your intent online through the [Saskatchewan Organ and Tissue Donor Registry](#). It is important to register if you want to be a donor. The health card organ donation sticker no longer exists. Anyone 16 and older with a Saskatchewan Health Card can register on the donor registry.

Fill out the message boxy below to tell your proxy(ies) and family your thoughts about organ and tissue donation.

Message for my proxy and family about organ and tissue donation:

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Witness Name: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS AND DIRECTIONS

Additional Directions: If you have any additional information you wish to share, or specific directions that are important to you that you have not shared please add that information here. (Example: intubation, feeding tubes, tracheotomy, dialysis, antibiotics, specific spiritual/cultural rituals etc.)

SIGNING, DATING, AND WITNESSING

You must sign and date this Health Care Directive to indicate to your proxy(ies), family, and health care team that you are in agreement with the wishes you have expressed. You do not need to have it witnessed to be considered legal; however, it is recommended if you do a lot of traveling outside of the province. If you choose to have the document(s) witnessed your proxy and their spouse cannot be the witness(es).

If you cannot sign but can make your mark or direct someone to sign for you, then your mark or that person's signature must be witnessed. Under these circumstances your Proxy named in this directive cannot be a witness nor can your Proxy's spouse.

I, _____ am thinking clearly, I understand the meaning of the questions and the choices I have made, and I have made this Health Care Directive/Proxy appointment voluntarily.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Witness Name: _____

Witness Signature: _____ Date: _____

The Saskatchewan Health Authority wishes to thank the following for their inspiration and guidance in this project:

- The Advance Care Planning Education Working Group
- Patient and Family Partners
- First Nations and Metis Health
- The Conversation Project
- Advance Care Planning Canada



[SHA Advance Care Planning Website](#)



CS-PIER-0053

Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.

PIER—Patient Information and Education Resource

SEPTEMBER 2023