

## Things to Know About Health Care Planning 101

### 1. What is Health Care Planning?

Health care planning is a process of choosing care that's right for you, and communicating your choices in a personal plan to receive quality person-centered care, all through your life. It's both an **everyday care planning**, working in partnership with your doctors for proactive, preventative care, and **advance care planning**, writing down your choices for the care you want and do not want. Together everyday and advanced care planning help create a personal roadmap you can revise and add to as your health needs and preferences change overtime. It helps your doctors and care providers match the best possible care to your choices, not just at the end of life, but all through your life.

### 2. Who can make a plan?

Any adult who is competent and 18 years old and older can make a health care plan. Adults who have the capacity to make effective medical decisions can make a personal health care plan that reflects their care goals, values and beliefs. It's your healthcare, it's your choice.

### 3. Why should you make a plan?

Every competent adult should make a personal health care plan, as it:

- Protects your rights to get the care you want, even if you have a sudden accident or serious illness and can't make medical decisions for yourself;
- Supports your family in knowing how to care for you, and can lessen their burden;
- Tells your doctors how to match the best possible care to your preferences and choices.

### 4. How do you make a plan?

Honoring Choices provides information, tools and a 3-step planning guide to help you make your own plan, or help a loved one make a plan. You can use the 3-step guide at any age or any stage of health. It contains useful information from local experts and leaders, and free downloadable Massachusetts documents to help you:

- Explore: Consider information and reflect on your values & beliefs to *make choices for care*;
- Plan: Write down your choices using Massachusetts documents to *communicate your choices*;
- Connect: Put your plan into action with doctors, family, & agents to *honor your choices*.

Read more about the 3-Step Planning Guide at [www.honoringchoicesmass.com/explore](http://www.honoringchoicesmass.com/explore)

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### 5. What are the health care planning documents we use in Massachusetts?

You can choose documents to add to your plan over your lifetime. Here are the legal, personal and medical documents we use:

- Health Care Proxy is a legal document in which you choose a trusted person as your Health Care Agent, to carry out your instructions for care and make medical decisions on your behalf, if you are unable to make medical decisions yourself.
- Personal Directive or Living Will is a personal document in which you give your Health Care Agent information and instructions about your preferences and choices for care.
- Durable Power of Attorney is a legal document in which you choose a trusted person to be your 'Attorney-in-fact', to manage your money, property and financial matters if you are unable to manage your financial matters yourself.
- Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment, MOLST is a medical order in which adults with advanced illness have a discussion with their clinicians about the use of life-sustaining treatment, and document their choices and preferences for the care they want in a MOLST form.
- Comfort Care/ Do Not Resuscitate Order, CC/DNR is a medical document that directs medical personnel not to restart your heart beat and breathing if your heart beat and breathing have stopped, but to provide comfort care measures.

Read more about planning documents at [www.honoringchoicesmass.com/explore](http://www.honoringchoicesmass.com/explore)

### 6. How do you put your plan into action to get the best possible care?

Talk with your care providers about your goals for care and place a copy of your Health Care Proxy, and if you like Personal Directive, into your medical record. It tells your care providers who to speak to about your care and the kind of care you want, if one day you are unable to make decisions for yourself. You and your care providers can review, revise, and add to your plan as your health care needs change. Working in partnership will ensure your plan is well defined and can be honored.

### 7. How do you get started?

Honoring Choices provides information, tools and a 3-step planning guide to help you make a plan that's right for you. Some people start with the 3-step guide to explore information and tools, and others prefer to start by downloading a free Health Care Proxy and Personal Directive with easy to follow instructions. It's your choice. Start where it makes the most sense and talk with your family and care providers about the care you want. Visit our website at [www.honoringchoicesmass.com](http://www.honoringchoicesmass.com)