

# SUGGESTIONS FOR PREPARING WILL TO LIVE DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

*(Please read the document itself before reading this.  
It will help you better understand the suggestions.)*

**YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO FILL OUT ANY PART OF THIS "WILL TO LIVE" OR ANY OTHER DOCUMENT SUCH AS A LIVING WILL OR DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE. NO ONE MAY FORCE YOU TO SIGN THIS DOCUMENT OR ANY OTHER OF ITS KIND.**

The Will to Live form starts from the principle that the presumption should be for life. If you sign it without writing any "SPECIAL CONDITIONS," you are giving directions to your health care provider(s) and health care agent<sup>1</sup> to do their best to preserve your life.

Some people may wish to continue certain types of medical treatment when they are terminally ill and in the final stages of life. Others may not.

If you wish to refuse some specific medical treatment, the Will to Live form provides space to do so ("SPECIAL CONDITIONS"). You may make special conditions for your treatment when your death is imminent, meaning you will live no more than a week even if given all available medical treatment; or when you are incurably terminally ill, meaning you will live no more than three months even if given all available medical treatment. There is also space for you to write down special conditions for circumstances you describe yourself.

The important thing for you to remember if you choose to fill out any part of the "SPECIAL CONDITIONS" sections of the Will to Live is that you must be very specific in listing what treatments you do not want. Some examples of how to be specific will be given shortly, or you may ask your physician what types of treatment might be expected in your specific case.

Why is it important to be specific? Because, given the pro-euthanasia views widespread in society and particularly among many (not all) health care providers, there is great danger that a vague description of what you do not want will be misunderstood or distorted so as to deny you treatment that you do want.

Many in the medical profession as well as in the courts are now so committed to the

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<sup>1</sup> Some states use the terms "attorney in fact," "surrogate," "designee," and "representative" instead of "agent." They are synonymous for purposes of these suggestions.

quality of life ethic that they take as a given that patients with severe disabilities are better off dead and would prefer not to receive either life-saving measures or nutrition and hydration. So pervasive is this "consensus" that it is accurate to say that in practice it is no longer true that the "presumption is for life" but rather for death. In other words, instead of assuming that a now incompetent patient would want to receive treatment and care in the absence of clear evidence to the contrary, the assumption has virtually become that since any "reasonable" person would want to exercise a "right to die," treatment and care should be withheld or withdrawn unless there is evidence to the contrary. The Will to Live is intended to maximize the chance of providing that evidence.

It is important to remember that you are writing a legal document, not holding a conversation, and not writing a moral textbook. The language you or a religious or moral leader might use in discussing what is and is not moral to refuse is, from a legal standpoint, often much too vague. Therefore, it is subject to misunderstanding or deliberate abuse.

The person you appoint as your health care agent may understand general terms in the same way you do. But remember that the person you appoint may die, or become incapacitated, or simply be unavailable when decisions must be made about your health care. If any of these happens, a court might appoint someone else you don't know in that person's place. Also remember that since the agent has to follow the instructions you write in this form, a health care provider could try to persuade a court that the agent isn't really following your wishes. A court could overrule your agent's insistence on treatment in cases in which the court interprets any vague language you put in your "Will to Live" less protectively than you meant it.

So, for example, do not simply say you don't want "extraordinary treatment." Whatever the value of that language in moral discussions, there is so much debate over what it means legally that it could be interpreted very broadly by a doctor or a court. For instance, it might be interpreted to require starving you to death when you have a disability, even if you are in no danger of death if you are fed.

For the same reason, do not use language rejecting treatment which has a phrase like "excessive pain, expense or other excessive burden." Doctors and courts may have a very different definition of what is "excessive" or a "burden" than you do. Do not use language that rejects treatment that "does not offer a reasonable hope of benefit." "Benefit" is a legally vague term. If you had a significant disability, a health care provider or court might think you would want no medical treatment at all, since many doctors and judges unfortunately believe there is no "benefit" to life with a severe disability.

What sort of language is specific enough if you wish to write exclusions? Here are some examples of things you might--or might not--want to list under one or more of the "Special Conditions" described on the form. Remember that any of these will prevent treatment ONLY under the circumstances--such as when death is imminent--described in the "Special Condition" you list it under. (The examples are not meant to be all inclusive--just samples of the type of thing you might want to write.)

"Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)." (If you would like CPR in some but not all circumstances when you are terminally ill, you should try to be still more specific: for example, you might write "CPR if cardiopulmonary arrest has been caused by my terminal illness or a complication of it." This would mean that you would still get CPR if, for example, you were the victim of smoke inhalation in a fire.) "Organ transplants." (Again, you could be still more specific, rejecting, for example, just a "heart transplant.")

"Surgery that would not cure me, would not improve either my mental or my physical condition, would not make me more comfortable, and would not help me to have less pain, but would only keep me alive longer."

"A treatment that will itself cause me severe, intractable, and long-lasting pain but will not cure me."

### **Pain Relief**

Under the "General Presumption for Life," of your Will to Live, you will be given medication necessary to control any pain you may have "as long as the medication is not used in order to cause my death." This means that you may be given pain medication that has the secondary, but unintended, effect of shortening your life. If this is not your wish, you may want to write something like one of the following under the third set of "Special Conditions" (the section for conditions you describe yourself):

"I would like medication to relieve my pain but only to the extent the medication would not seriously threaten to shorten my life." OR

"I would like medication to relieve my pain but only to the extent it is known, to a reasonable medical certainty, that it will not shorten my life."

Think carefully about any special conditions you decide to write in your "Will to Live." You may want to show them to your intended agent and a couple of other people to see if they find them clear and if they mean the same thing to them as they mean to you. Remember that how carefully you write may literally be a matter of life or death--your own.

**AFTER WRITING DOWN YOUR SPECIAL CONDITIONS, IF ANY, YOU SHOULD MARK OUT THE REST OF THE BLANK LINES LEFT ON THE FORM FOR THEM (JUST AS YOU DO AFTER WRITING OUT THE AMOUNT ON A CHECK) TO PREVENT ANY DANGER THAT SOMEBODY OTHER THAN YOU COULD WRITE IN SOMETHING ELSE.**

**IT IS WISE TO REVIEW YOUR WILL TO LIVE PERIODICALLY TO ENSURE THAT IT STILL GIVES THE DIRECTIONS YOU WANT FOLLOWED.**

Robert Powell Center for Medical Ethics  
National Right to Life  
[www.nrlc.org](http://www.nrlc.org) ~ (202) 378-8862

## **How to use the New Hampshire Will to Live Form SUGGESTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

1. This document allows you to name a health care agent who will make health care decisions for you whenever you are unable to make them for yourself. It also allows you to give instructions concerning medical treatment decisions that the health care agent must follow. You must sign and date this document in the presence of two witnesses. If you are physically unable to sign, you may direct some other person to sign your name to the document for you in your presence.
2. Carefully read and sign the “Information Concerning the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care” at the beginning of the form. Among other things, it explains who may and may not serve as your health care agent and as witnesses to the document.
3. New Hampshire law requires the use of a particular form set forth in the statute, which includes a place at the end for notarization as well as witnesses for the document. However, while the law **REQUIRES** two witnesses, it does **NOT** require notarization. So, while it is a good practice to have the document notarized, it is better to complete it, with witnesses but without notarization, than not to complete it at all.
4. **BEFORE** the “Will to Live” language, which is placed under number 4, and begins on page 4, the form has 3 numbered statements on page 3, below each of which it is possible to circle “yes” or “no”. These are required to be on the form by New Hampshire law. You should understand, however, that their language either is inconsistent with or duplicates the “Will to Live” language which appears later. **IF** you wish the document to be clear and consistent with the Will to Live language, you will want **NOT** to circle or initial under any of the statements numbered 1 through 3.
5. The declaration will remain in effect until you revoke (cancel) it. You may revoke this document at any time. The revocation may be made by notifying your health care agent or health or residential care provider orally, or in writing, or in any way by which you are able to indicate your intent to revoke. If you choose your spouse as your health care agent and either of you file for divorce, this document will automatically be revoked unless you have designated alternate health care agent(s) as provided on the form. In that case, the alternate will then become your health care agent. This document will also be revoked if you later sign a new durable power of attorney.
6. If you want to make changes in the document, after you have signed it, you must revoke it and then make a new one
7. This type of document has been authorized by the New Hampshire Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care Act, N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. §§ 137-J:1 to J:16.

8. You should periodically review this document to be sure it complies with your wishes. Before making any changes, be aware that it is possible that the statutes controlling this document have changed since this form was prepared. Contact the Will to Live Project by visiting [www.nrlc.org](http://www.nrlc.org) (click on “Will to Live”) or an attorney to determine if this form can still be used.
9. If you have any questions about this document or want assistance filling it out, please consult an attorney.

For additional copies of the Will to Live, please visit [www.nrlc.org](http://www.nrlc.org)

Form prepared 2002  
\*clerical changes made 08/05

## **New Hampshire Power of Attorney for Health Care with Will to Live Language**

**Information concerning the New Hampshire Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care: This is an important legal document. Before signing this document you should know these important facts:**

Except to the extent you state otherwise, this document gives the person you name as your agent the authority to make any and all health care decisions for you when you are no longer capable of making them yourself. "Health care" means any treatment, service, or procedure to maintain, diagnose or treat your physical or mental condition. Your agent, therefore, can have the power to make a broad range of health care decisions for you. Your agent may consent, refuse to consent, or withdraw consent to medical treatment and may make decisions about withdrawing or withholding life-sustaining treatment. Your agent cannot consent or direct any of the following: commitment to a state institution, sterilization, or termination of treatment if you are pregnant and if the withdrawal of that treatment is deemed likely to terminate the pregnancy unless the failure to withhold the treatment will be physically harmful to you or prolong severe pain which cannot be alleviated by medication.

If you want to give your agent authority to withhold or withdraw the artificial providing of nutrition and fluids, your document must say so. Otherwise your agent will not be able to direct that. You may state in this document any treatment that you do not desire, except as stated above, or treatment that you want to be sure you receive. Your agent's authority will begin when your doctor certifies that you lack the capacity to make health care decisions. If for moral or religious reasons you do not wish to be treated by a doctor or examined by a doctor for certification that you lack capacity, you must say so in the document and name a person to be able to certify your lack of capacity. That person may not be your agent or alternate agent or any person ineligible to be your agent. You may attach additional pages if you need more space to complete your statement.

Under no conditions will your agent be able to direct the withholding of food and drink for you to eat and drink normally.

Your agent will be obligated to follow your instructions when making decisions on your behalf. Unless you state otherwise, your agent will have the same authority to make decisions about your health care as you would have had if made consistent with state law.

It is important that you discuss this document with your physician or other health care providers before you sign it to make sure that you understand the nature and range of

decisions which may be made on your behalf. If you do not have a physician, you should talk with someone else who is knowledgeable about these issues and can answer your questions. You do not need a lawyer's assistance to complete this document, but if there is anything in this document that you do not understand, you should ask a lawyer to explain it to you.

The person you appoint as agent should be someone you know and trust and must be at least 18 years old. If you appoint your health or residential care provider (e.g. your physician, or an employee of a home health agency, hospital, nursing home, or residential care home, other than a relative), that person will have to choose between acting as your agent or as your health or residential care provider; the law does not permit a person to do both at the same time.

You should inform the person you appoint that you want him or her to be your health care agent. You should discuss this document with your agent and your physician and give each a signed copy. You should indicate on the document itself the people and institutions who will have signed copies. Your agent will not be liable for health care decisions made in good faith on your behalf.

Even after you have signed this document, you have the right to make health care decisions for yourself as long as you are able to do so, and treatment cannot be given to you or stopped over your objection. You have the right to revoke the authority granted to your agent by informing him or her or your health care provider orally or in writing.

This document may not be changed or modified. If you want to make changes in the document you must make an entirely new one.

You should consider designating an alternate agent in the event that your agent is unwilling, unable, unavailable, or ineligible to act as your agent. Any alternate agent you designate will have the same authority to make health care decisions for you.

**THIS POWER OF ATTORNEY WILL NOT BE VALID UNLESS IT IS SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF TWO (2) OR MORE QUALIFIED WITNESSES WHO MUST BOTH BE PRESENT WHEN YOU SIGN AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR SIGNATURE. THE FOLLOWING PERSONS MAY NOT ACT AS WITNESSES:**

- the person you designate as your agent
- your spouse
- your lawful heirs or beneficiaries named in your will or a deed;

**ONLY ONE OF THE WITNESSES MAY BE YOUR HEALTH OR RESIDENTIAL CARE PROVIDER OR ONE OF THEIR EMPLOYEES.**

The following may NOT exercise the authority of agent while serving in one of the following capacities:

- I. The principal's health care provider
- II. A nonrelative of the principal who is an employee of the principal's health care provider.
- III. The principal's residential care provider
- IV. A nonrelative of the principal who is an employee of the principal's residential care provider.

I hereby acknowledge that I have received this disclosure statement. I have read and understand the information contained in the disclosure statement.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby appoint \_\_\_\_\_  
Of \_\_\_\_\_

as my agent to make any and all health care decisions for me, except to the extent I state otherwise in this document or as prohibited by law. This durable power of attorney for health care shall take effect in the event I become unable to make my own health care decisions.

**STATEMENT OF DESIRES, SPECIAL PROVISIONS,  
AND LIMITATIONS REGARDING HEALTH CARE DECISIONS**

For your convenience in expressing your wishes, some general statements concerning the withholding or removal of life-sustaining treatment are set forth below. (Life-sustaining treatment is defined as procedures without which a person would die, such as but not limited to the following: cardiopulmonary resuscitation, mechanical respiration, kidney dialysis or the use of other external mechanical and technological devices, drugs to maintain blood pressure, blood transfusions, and antibiotics.) There is also a section which allows you to set forth specific directions for these or other matters. If you wish you may indicate your agreement or disagreement with any of the following statements and give your agent power to act in those specific circumstances.



1. If I become permanently incompetent to make health care decisions, and if I am also suffering from a terminal illness, I authorize my agent to direct that life-sustaining treatment be discontinued.

(YES) (NO) (Circle your choice and initial beneath it.)

2. Whether terminally ill or not, if I become permanently unconscious I authorize my agent to direct that life-sustaining treatment be discontinued.

(YES) (NO) (Circle your choice and initial beneath it.)

3. I realize that situations could arise in which the only way to allow me to die would be to discontinue artificial feeding (artificial nutrition and hydration). In carrying out any instructions I have given above in #1 or #2 or any instructions I may write in #4 below, I authorize my agent to direct that (circle your choice or (a) or (b) beside it):

a) artificial nutrition and hydration not to be started or, if started, be discontinued,

-or-

b) although all other forms of life-sustaining treatment be withdrawn, artificial nutrition and hydration continue to be given to me. (If you fail to complete item 3, your agent will not have the power to direct the withdrawal of artificial nutrition and hydration.)

4. Here you may include any specific desires or limitations you deem appropriate, such as when or what life-sustaining treatment you would want used or withheld, or instructions about refusing any specific types of treatment that are inconsistent with your religious beliefs or unacceptable to you for any other reason. You may leave this question blank if you desire.

### **GENERAL PRESUMPTION FOR LIFE**

I direct my health care provider(s) and health care agent to make health care decisions consistent with my general desire for the use of medical treatment that would preserve my life, as well as for the use of medical treatment that can cure, improve, reduce or prevent deterioration in, any physical or mental condition.

Food and water are not medical treatment, but basic necessities. I direct my health care provider(s) and health care agent to provide me with food and fluids, orally, intravenously, by tube, or by other means to the full extent necessary both to preserve my life and to assure me the optimal health possible.

I direct that medication to alleviate my pain be provided, as long as the medication is not used in order to cause my death.

I direct that the following be provided:

- the administration of medication;
- cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR); and
- the performance of all other medical procedures, techniques, and technologies, including surgery,

—all to the full extent necessary to correct, reverse, or alleviate life-threatening or health impairing conditions or complications arising from those conditions.

I also direct that I be provided basic nursing care and procedures to provide comfort care.

I reject, however, any treatments that use an unborn or newborn child, or any tissue or organ of an unborn or newborn child, who has been subject to an induced abortion. This rejection does not apply to the use of tissues or organs obtained in the course of the removal of an ectopic pregnancy.

I also reject any treatments that use an organ or tissue of another person obtained in a manner that causes, contributes to, or hastens that person's death.

I request and direct that medical treatment and care be provided to me to preserve my life without discrimination based on my age or physical or mental disability or the "quality" of my life. I reject any action or omission that is intended to cause or hasten my death.

I direct my health care provider(s) and health care agent to follow the policy above, even if I am judged to be incompetent.

During the time I am incompetent, my agent, as named below, is authorized to make medical decisions on my behalf, consistent with the above policy, after consultation with my health care provider(s), utilizing the most current diagnoses and/or prognosis of my medical condition, in the following situations with the written special instructions.

#### **WHEN MY DEATH IS IMMINENT**

B. If I have an incurable terminal illness or injury, and I will die imminently – meaning that a reasonably prudent physician, knowledgeable about the case and the treatment possibilities with respect to the medical conditions involved, would judge that I will live only a week or less even if lifesaving treatment or care is provided to me – the following my be withheld or withdrawn: **(Be as specific as possible; SEE SUGGESTIONS.):**

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(Cross off any remaining blank lines.)

**WHEN I AM TERMINALLY ILL**

C. Final Stage of Terminal Condition. If I have an incurable terminal illness or injury and even though death is not imminent I am in the final stage of that terminal condition – meaning that a reasonably prudent physician, knowledgeable about the case and the treatment possibilities with respect to the medical conditions involved, would judge that I will live only three months or less, even if lifesaving treatment or care is provided to me – the following may be withheld or withdrawn:

**(Be as specific as possible; SEE SUGGESTIONS.):**

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(Cross off any remaining blank lines.)

**D. OTHER SPECIAL CONDITIONS:**

**(Be as specific as possible; SEE SUGGESTIONS.):**

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(Cross off any remaining blank lines.)

**IF I AM PREGNANT**

E. Special Instructions for Pregnancy. If I am pregnant, I direct my health care provider(s) and health care agent (s) to use all lifesaving procedures for myself with none of the above special conditions applying if there is a chance that prolonging my life might allow my child to be born alive. I also direct that lifesaving procedures be used even I am legally determined to be brain dead if there is a chance that doing so might allow my child to be born alive. Except as I specify by writing my signature in the box below, no one is authorized to consent to any procedure for me that would result in the death of my unborn child.

If I am pregnant, and I am not in the final stage of a terminal condition as defined above, medical procedures required to prevent my death are authorized even if they may result in the death of my unborn child provided every possible effort is made to preserve both my life and the life of my unborn child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal

In the event the person I appoint above is unable, unwilling or unavailable, or ineligible to act as my health care agent, I hereby appoint \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ as alternate agent.

I hereby acknowledge that I have been provided with a disclosure statement explaining the effect of this document. I have read and understand the information contained in the disclosure statement.

The original of this document will be kept at \_\_\_\_\_  
And the following persons and institutions will have signed copies:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In witness whereof, I have hereunto signed my name this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare the principal appears to be of sound mind and free from duress at the time the durable power of attorney for health care is signed and that the principal has affirmed that he or she is aware of the nature of the document and is signing freely and voluntarily.

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
by \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public/ Justice of the Peace

\_\_\_\_\_  
My Commission Expires

Form Prepared 2002  
clerical changes made 08/05