

REPRESENTATION AGREEMENTS

Representation Agreements are documents that allow adults to appoint representatives to make their health and personal care decisions in the event that they are not able to. These documents have only been available since February 2000. In the past many people wrote **Living Wills**, but those were not legally binding documents and they could be over-ridden or ignored by family members or the medical community. Today, a Representation Agreement may be written as general or as specific as the individual's circumstances require.

A Representation Agreement appoints the Representatives and Alternate Representatives and sets out their duties and responsibilities. A Statement of Wishes, Beliefs and Values allow individuals to detail specifically what type of medical and personal care they wish which helps to guide his/her representative. Most adults make Section 9 Representation Agreements. Sec 9 RAs are the most powerful health care agreements and they allow the representative to make decisions about life support and life prolonging medical interventions. Some adults who have been deemed incapable of making other decisions may often still make Section 7 Representation Agreements. Sec 7 RAs allow representatives to make financial, health and personal care decisions, but not decisions about life support and life prolonging medical interventions.

The Representation Agreement only comes into effect if the individual who has made the Agreement becomes incapacitated.

Making a Representation Agreement and Statement of Wishes, Beliefs and Values allows the adult to decide what he or she wants. It relieves family and friends from being burdened with making very difficult decisions as the documents clarify what to do and state who may carry out the adult's wishes.

If adults want to be very specific about their health care wishes they may make **Advance Directives**. These directives are legally binding on the medical community and representatives. Representatives are no longer able to make decisions about the areas specified in the Advance Directives.

A **Power of Attorney** is a very powerful document that allows adults to appoint others to make legal and financial decisions for them, but it does not authorize the attorney appointed to make medical and personal care decisions.

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