

Healthcare Power of Attorney

A Healthcare Power of Attorney (HCPOA) is a legal document that lets someone you choose make healthcare choices for you if you can't make them yourself. It explains what kind of healthcare you want and helps your HCPOA make decisions about your health just like you would. You can get a Healthcare Power of Attorney as long as you can tell your wishes about your healthcare, so it's a good idea to do it sooner rather than later. You can always change or update it if your wishes change.

Why Have a Healthcare POA?

Your HCPOA, called your Agent, can make sure someone you trust will make medical choices on your behalf if you can't tell your healthcare providers yourself.



What Kind of Choices Can My Agent Make?

Your Agent can make many kinds of choices, such as:

- Checking you in or out of a hospital or nursing home
- Deciding what medicine or treatments you will get
- Choosing who has access to your medical records

Your Agent can only make these choices if you are unable to do so yourself. They must follow your wishes when making decisions for you.

Who Can Be My Agent?

Your Agent can be anyone over 18 years old, except your doctor or healthcare provider. They can be a family member, friend, or any other trusted adult. You can choose more than one Agent if you want. Two Agents can work as co-Agents, meaning they make decisions together as equals. They can also act as successive Agents, where the second person takes over if the first one cannot. It's a good idea to talk to your Agent(s) about your care choices and make sure they are willing to make decisions for you, even if it might be difficult.



How to Create a Healthcare POA

Because this is a legal document, there are some rules for creating a HCPOA. Your Healthcare Power of Attorney must be completed and signed by you. You need to complete it while you are still well enough to make healthcare choices. Two witnesses must watch you sign the document, and it must be notarized. A witness is an adult who sees you sign it; they can be a friend, neighbor, or even a stranger.

It's helpful to talk with people close to you about the care you want. Your doctor or healthcare provider can answer medical questions. If you have questions about the law, it's a good idea to talk to a lawyer. Once your Healthcare POA is complete, you should give a copy to your Agent, your doctors, and anyone else you trust.

Getting it Notarized

You can find a notary near you in North Carolina through the Secretary of State website (see Resources below).

Also, unlike a Power of Attorney, your Healthcare Power of Attorney does not require a lawyer.

Resources

You can find the NC HCPOA form and how-to guide at the [eforms](#) website.

You can find a notary near you in North Carolina through the [Secretary of State](#) website. (They usually charge a small fee (less than \$10)).

Get Started with Healthcare Power of Attorney

Step 1. Choose who you would like to be your Agent(s) and talk to them.

Step 2. Fill out the NC Healthcare POA form (see Resources, above).

Step 3. Find a Notary. You can find a Notary at your bank, UPS Stores, public libraries, real estate agencies, law firms, or at the NC Secretary of State website (see Resources, above).

Step 4. Sign the document in front of two witnesses and the notary.

Step 5. Give a copy of your signed, notarized document to your Agent(s) and your healthcare provider. Make a note on your copy of the date and anyone ho you shared it with so if you ever make changes, you will remember who to give the updated copy to.