

Selected Florida Statutes

Chapter 765 HEALTH CARE ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

765.101 Definitions.--As used in this chapter:

(1) "Advance directive" means a witnessed written document or oral statement in which instructions are given by a principal or in which the principal's desires are expressed concerning any aspect of the principal's health care, and includes, but is not limited to, the designation of a health care surrogate, a living will, or an anatomical gift made pursuant to part X of chapter 732.

(2) "Attending physician" means the primary physician who has responsibility for the treatment and care of the patient.

(3) "Close personal friend" means any person 18 years of age or older who has exhibited special care and concern for the patient, and who presents an affidavit to the health care facility or to the attending or treating physician stating that he or she is a friend of the patient; is willing and able to become involved in the patient's health care; and has maintained such regular contact with the patient so as to be familiar with the patient's activities, health, and religious or moral beliefs.

(4) "End-stage condition" means an irreversible condition that is caused by injury, disease, or illness which has resulted in progressively severe and permanent deterioration, and which, to a reasonable degree of medical probability, treatment of the condition would be ineffective.

(5) "Health care decision" means:

(a) Informed consent, refusal of consent, or withdrawal of consent to any and all health care, including life-prolonging procedures.

(b) The decision to apply for private, public, government, or veterans' benefits to defray the cost of health care.

(c) The right of access to all records of the principal reasonably necessary for a health care surrogate to make decisions involving health care and to apply for benefits.

(d) The decision to make an anatomical gift pursuant to part X of chapter 732.

(6) "Health care facility" means a hospital, nursing home, hospice, home health agency, or health maintenance organization licensed in this state, or any facility subject to part I of chapter 394.

(7) "Health care provider" or "provider" means any person licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized by law to administer health care in the ordinary course of business or practice of a profession.

(8) "Incapacity" or "incompetent" means the patient is physically or mentally unable to communicate a willful and knowing health care decision. For the purposes of making an anatomical gift, the term also includes a patient who is deceased.

(9) "Informed consent" means consent voluntarily given by a person after a sufficient explanation and disclosure of the subject matter involved to enable that person to have a general understanding of the treatment or procedure and the medically acceptable alternatives, including the substantial risks and hazards inherent in the proposed treatment or procedures, and to make a knowing health care decision without coercion or undue influence.

(10) "Life-prolonging procedure" means any medical procedure, treatment, or intervention, including artificially provided sustenance and hydration, which sustains, restores, or supplants a spontaneous vital function. The term does not include the administration of medication or performance of medical procedure, when such medication or procedure is deemed necessary to provide comfort care or to alleviate pain.

(11) "Living will" or "declaration" means:

(a) A witnessed document in writing, voluntarily executed by the principal in accordance with s. 765.302; or

(b) A witnessed oral statement made by the principal expressing the principal's instructions concerning life-prolonging procedures.

(12) "Persistent vegetative state" means a permanent and irreversible condition of unconsciousness in which there is:

(a) The absence of voluntary action or cognitive behavior of any kind.

(b) An inability to communicate or interact purposefully with the environment.

(13) "Physician" means a person licensed pursuant to chapter 458 or chapter 459.

(14) "Principal" means a competent adult executing an advance directive and on whose behalf health care decisions are to be made.

(15) "Proxy" means a competent adult who has not been expressly designated to make health care decisions for a particular incapacitated individual, but who, nevertheless, is authorized pursuant to s. 765.401 to make health care decisions for such individual.

(16) "Surrogate" means any competent adult expressly designated by a principal to make health care decisions on behalf of the principal upon the principal's incapacity.

(17) "Terminal condition" means a condition caused by injury, disease, or illness from which there is no reasonable medical probability of recovery and which, without treatment, can be expected to cause death.

765.102 Legislative findings and intent.--

(1) The Legislature finds that every competent adult has the fundamental right of self-determination regarding decisions pertaining to his or her own health, including the right to choose or refuse medical treatment. This right is subject to certain interests of society, such as the protection of human life and the preservation of ethical standards in the medical profession.

(2) To ensure that such right is not lost or diminished by virtue of later physical or mental incapacity, the Legislature intends that a procedure be established to allow a person to plan for incapacity by executing a document or orally designating another person to direct the course of his or her medical treatment upon his or her incapacity. Such procedure should be less expensive and less restrictive than guardianship and permit a previously incapacitated person to exercise his or her full right to make health care decisions as soon as the capacity to make such decisions has been regained.

(3) The Legislature recognizes that for some the administration of life-prolonging medical procedures may result in only a precarious and burdensome existence. In order to ensure that the rights and intentions of a person may be respected even after he or she is no longer able to participate actively in decisions concerning himself or herself, and to encourage communication among such patient, his or her family, and his or her physician, the Legislature declares that the laws of this state recognize the right of a competent adult to make an advance directive instructing his or her physician to provide, withhold, or withdraw life-prolonging procedures, or to designate another to make the treatment decision for him or her in the event that such person should become incapacitated and unable to personally direct his or her medical care.

(4) The Legislature recognizes the need for all health care professionals to rapidly increase their understanding of end-of-life and palliative care. Therefore, the Legislature encourages the professional regulatory boards to adopt appropriate standards and guidelines regarding end-of-life care and pain management and encourages educational institutions established to train health care professionals and allied health professionals to implement curricula to train such professionals to provide end-of-life care, including pain management and palliative care.

(5) For purposes of this chapter:

(a) Palliative care is the comprehensive management of the physical, psychological, social, spiritual, and existential needs of patients. Palliative care is especially suited to the care of persons who have incurable, progressive illnesses.

(b) Palliative care must include:

1. An opportunity to discuss and plan for end-of-life care.
2. Assurance that physical and mental suffering will be carefully attended to.
3. Assurance that preferences for withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining interventions will be honored.
4. Assurance that the personal goals of the dying person will be addressed.
5. Assurance that the dignity of the dying person will be a priority.
6. Assurance that health care providers will not abandon the dying person.
7. Assurance that the burden to family and others will be addressed.
8. Assurance that advance directives for care will be respected regardless of the location of care.
9. Assurance that organizational mechanisms are in place to evaluate the availability and quality of end-of-life, palliative, and hospice care services, including the evaluation of administrative and regulatory barriers.
10. Assurance that necessary health care services will be provided and that relevant reimbursement policies are available.
11. Assurance that the goals expressed in subparagraphs 1.-10. will be accomplished in a culturally appropriate manner.

(6) The Department of Elderly Affairs, the Agency for Health Care Administration, and the Department of Health shall jointly create a campaign on end-of-life care for purposes of educating the public. This campaign should include culturally sensitive programs to improve understanding of end-of-life care issues in minority communities.

765.103 Existing advance directives.

Any advance directive made prior to October 1, 1999, shall be given effect as executed, provided such directive was legally effective when written.

765.104 Amendment or revocation.

(1) An advance directive or designation of a surrogate may be amended or revoked at any time by a competent principal:

- (a) By means of a signed, dated writing;
- (b) By means of the physical cancellation or destruction of the advance directive by the principal or by another in the principal's presence and at the principal's direction;
- (c) By means of an oral expression of intent to amend or revoke; or
- (d) By means of a subsequently executed advance directive that is materially different from a previously executed advance directive.

(2) Unless otherwise provided in the advance directive or in an order of dissolution or annulment of marriage, the dissolution or annulment of marriage of the principal revokes the designation of the principal's former spouse as a surrogate.

(3) Any such amendment or revocation will be effective when it is communicated to the surrogate, health care provider, or health care facility. No civil or criminal liability shall be imposed upon any person for a failure to act upon an amendment or revocation unless that person has actual knowledge of such amendment or revocation.

(4) Any patient for whom a medical proxy has been recognized under s. 765.401 and for whom any previous legal disability that precluded the patient's ability to consent is removed may amend or revoke the recognition of the medical proxy and any uncompleted decision made by that proxy. The amendment or revocation takes effect when it is communicated to the proxy, the health care provider, or the health care facility in writing or, if communicated orally, in the presence of a third person.

765.105 Review of surrogate or proxy's decision

The patient's family, the health care facility, or the attending physician, or any other interested person who may reasonably be expected to be directly affected by the surrogate or proxy's decision concerning any health care decision may seek expedited judicial intervention pursuant to rule 5.900 of the Florida Probate Rules, if that person believes:

- (1) The surrogate or proxy's decision is not in accord with the patient's known desires or the provisions of this chapter;
- (2) The advance directive is ambiguous, or the patient has changed his or her mind after execution of the advance directive;
- (3) The surrogate or proxy was improperly designated or appointed, or the designation of the surrogate is no longer effective or has been revoked;
- (4) The surrogate or proxy has failed to discharge duties, or incapacity or illness renders the surrogate or proxy incapable of discharging duties;
- (5) The surrogate or proxy has abused powers; or
- (6) The patient has sufficient capacity to make his or her own health care decisions.

765.106 Preservation of existing rights.

The provisions of this chapter are cumulative to the existing law regarding an individual's right to consent, or refuse to consent, to medical treatment and do not impair any existing rights or responsibilities which a health care provider, a patient, including a minor, competent or incompetent person, or a patient's family may have under the common law, Federal Constitution, State Constitution, or statutes of this state.

765.107 Construction.

- (1) This chapter shall not be construed to repeal by implication any provision of s. 766.103, the Florida Medical Consent Law. For all purposes, the Florida Medical Consent Law shall be considered an alternative to provisions of this section.
- (2) Procedures provided in this chapter permitting the withholding or withdrawal of life-prolonging procedures do not apply to a person who never had capacity to designate a health care surrogate or execute a living will.

765.108 Effect with respect to insurance.

The making of an advance directive pursuant to the provisions of this chapter shall not affect the sale, procurement, or issuance of any policy of life insurance, nor shall such making of an advance directive be deemed to modify the terms of an existing policy of life insurance. No policy of life insurance will be legally impaired or invalidated by the withholding or withdrawal of life-prolonging procedures from an insured patient in accordance with the provisions of this chapter, nor by any other treatment decision made according to this chapter, notwithstanding any term of the policy to the contrary. A person shall not be required to make an advance directive as a condition for being insured for, or receiving, health care services.

765.109 Immunity from liability; weight of proof; presumption.

(1) A health care facility, provider, or other person who acts under the direction of a health care facility or provider is not subject to criminal prosecution or civil liability, and will not be deemed to have engaged in unprofessional conduct, as a result of carrying out a health care decision made in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. The surrogate or proxy who makes a health care decision on a patient's behalf, pursuant to this chapter, is not subject to criminal prosecution or civil liability for such action.

(2) The provisions of this section shall apply unless it is shown by a preponderance of the evidence that the person authorizing or effectuating a health care decision did not, in good faith, comply with the provisions of this chapter.

765.110 Health care facilities and providers; discipline.

(1) A health care facility, pursuant to Pub. L. No. 101-508, ss. 4206 and 4751, shall provide to each patient written information concerning the individual's rights concerning advance directives and the health care facility's policies respecting the implementation of such rights, and shall document in the patient's medical records whether or not the individual has executed an advance directive.

(2) A health care provider or health care facility may not require a patient to execute an advance directive or to execute a new advance directive using the facility's or provider's forms. The patient's advance directives shall travel with the patient as part of the patient's medical record.

(3) A health care provider or health care facility shall be subject to professional discipline and revocation of license or certification, and a fine of not more than \$1,000 per incident, or both, if the health care provider or health care facility, as a condition of treatment or admission, requires an individual to execute or waive an advance directive.

(4) The Department of Elderly Affairs for hospices and, in consultation with the Department of Elderly Affairs, the Department of Health for health care providers; the Agency for Health Care Administration for hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and health maintenance organizations; and the Department of Children and Family Services for facilities subject to part I of chapter 394 shall adopt rules to implement the provisions of the section.

765.1103 Pain management and palliative care.

(1) A patient shall be given information concerning pain management and palliative care when he or she discusses with the attending or treating physician, or such physician's designee, the diagnosis, planned course of treatment, alternatives, risks, or prognosis for his or her illness. If the patient is incapacitated, the information shall be given to the patient's health care surrogate or proxy, court-appointed guardian as provided in chapter 744, or attorney in fact under a durable power of attorney as provided in chapter 709. The

court-appointed guardian or attorney in fact must have been delegated authority to make health care decisions on behalf of the patient.

(2) Health care providers and practitioners regulated under chapter 458, chapter 459, or chapter 464 must, as appropriate, comply with a request for pain management or palliative care from a patient under their care or, for an incapacitated patient under their care, from a surrogate, proxy, guardian, or other representative permitted to make health care decisions for the incapacitated patient. Facilities regulated under chapter 395 or chapter 400 must comply with the pain management or palliative care measures ordered by the patient's physician.

765.1105 Transfer of a patient.

(1) A health care provider or facility that refuses to comply with a patient's advance directive, or the treatment decision of his or her surrogate, shall make reasonable efforts to transfer the patient to another health care provider or facility that will comply with the directive or treatment decision. This chapter does not require a health care provider or facility to commit any act which is contrary to the provider's or facility's moral or ethical beliefs, if the patient:

- (a) Is not in an emergency condition; and
- (b) Has received written information upon admission informing the patient of the policies of the health care provider or facility regarding such moral or ethical beliefs.

(2) A health care provider or facility that is unwilling to carry out the wishes of the patient or the treatment decision of his or her surrogate because of moral or ethical beliefs must within 7 days either:

- (a) Transfer the patient to another health care provider or facility. The health care provider or facility shall pay the costs for transporting the patient to another health care provider or facility; or
- (b) If the patient has not been transferred, carry out the wishes of the patient or the patient's surrogate, unless the provisions of s. 765.105 apply.

765.1115 Falsification, forgery, or willful concealment, cancellation, or destruction of directive or revocation or amendment; penalties.

(1) Any person who willfully conceals, cancels, defaces, obliterates, or damages an advance directive without the principal's consent or who falsifies or forges the revocation or amendment of an advance directive of another, and who thereby causes life-prolonging procedures to be utilized in contravention of the previously expressed intent of the principal, commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

(2) Any person who falsifies or forges the advance directive of another or who willfully conceals or withholds personal knowledge of the revocation of an advance directive, with the intent to cause a withholding or withdrawal of life-prolonging procedures contrary to the wishes of the principal, and who thereby because of such act directly causes life-prolonging procedures to be withheld or withdrawn and death to be hastened, commits a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082, s. 775.083, or s. 775.084.

765.112 Recognition of advance directive executed in another state.

An advance directive executed in another state in compliance with the law of that state or of this state is validly executed for the purposes of this chapter.

765.113 Restrictions on providing consent

Unless the principal expressly delegates such authority to the surrogate in writing, or a surrogate or proxy has sought and received court approval pursuant to rule 5.900 of the Florida Probate Rules, a surrogate or proxy may not provide consent for:

(1) Abortion, sterilization, electroshock therapy, psychosurgery, experimental treatments that have not been approved by a federally approved institutional review board in accordance with 45 C.F.R. part 46 or 21 C.F.R. part 56, or voluntary admission to a mental health facility.

(2) Withholding or withdrawing life-prolonging procedures from a pregnant patient prior to viability as defined in s. 390.0111(4).

765.201 Short title

Sections 765.202-765.205 may be cited as the "Florida Health Care Surrogate Act."

765.202 Designation of a health care surrogate

(1) A written document designating a surrogate to make health care decisions for a principal shall be signed by the principal in the presence of two subscribing adult witnesses. A principal unable to sign the instrument may, in the presence of witnesses, direct that another person sign the principal's name as required herein. An exact copy of the instrument shall be provided to the surrogate.

(2) The person designated as surrogate shall not act as witness to the execution of the document designating the health care surrogate. At least one person who acts as a witness shall be neither the principal's spouse nor blood relative.

(3) A document designating a health care surrogate may also designate an alternate surrogate provided the designation is explicit. The alternate surrogate may assume his or her duties as surrogate for the principal if the original surrogate is unwilling or unable to perform his or her duties. The principal's failure to designate an alternate surrogate shall not invalidate the designation.

(4) If neither the designated surrogate nor the designated alternate surrogate is able or willing to make health care decisions on behalf of the principal and in accordance with the principal's instructions, the health care facility may seek the appointment of a proxy pursuant to part IV.

(5) A principal may designate a separate surrogate to consent to mental health treatment in the event that the principal is determined by a court to be incompetent to consent to mental health treatment and a guardian advocate is appointed as provided under s. 394.4598. However, unless the document designating the health care surrogate expressly states otherwise, the court shall assume that the health care surrogate authorized to make health care decisions under this chapter is also the principal's choice to make decisions regarding mental health treatment.

(6) Unless the document states a time of termination, the designation shall remain in effect until revoked by the principal.

(7) A written designation of a health care surrogate executed pursuant to this section establishes a rebuttable presumption of clear and convincing evidence of the principal's designation of the surrogate.

765.203 Suggested form of designation.

A written designation of a health care surrogate executed pursuant to this chapter may, but need not be, in the following form:

DESIGNATION OF HEALTH CARE SURROGATE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_(Last)\_\_\_\_\_(First)\_\_\_\_\_(Middle Initial)\_\_\_\_\_

In the event that I have been determined to be incapacitated to provide informed consent for medical treatment and surgical and diagnostic procedures, I wish to designate as my surrogate for health care decisions:

Name:

-----

Address:

-----  
\_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

If my surrogate is unwilling or unable to perform his or her duties, I wish to designate as my alternate surrogate:

Name:

-----

Address:

-----  
\_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I fully understand that this designation will permit my designee to make health care decisions, except for anatomical gifts, unless I have executed an anatomical gift declaration pursuant to law, and to provide, withhold, or withdraw consent on my behalf; to apply for public benefits to defray the cost of health care; and to authorize my admission to or transfer from a health care facility.

Additional instructions (optional):

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

I further affirm that this designation is not being made as a condition of treatment or admission to a health care facility. I will notify and send a copy of this document to the following persons other than my surrogate, so they may know who my surrogate is.

Name:

-----

Name:

-----

-----

-----

Signed:

-----

Date:

-----

Witnesses:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

765.204 Capacity of principal; procedure.

(1) A principal is presumed to be capable of making health care decisions for herself or himself unless she or he is determined to be incapacitated. Incapacity may not be inferred from the person's voluntary or involuntary hospitalization for mental illness or from her or his mental retardation.

(2) If a principal's capacity to make health care decisions for herself or himself or provide informed consent is in question, the attending physician shall evaluate the principal's capacity and, if the physician concludes that the principal lacks capacity, enter that evaluation in the principal's medical record. If the attending physician has a question as to whether the principal lacks capacity, another physician shall also evaluate the principal's capacity, and if the second physician agrees that the principal lacks the capacity to make health care decisions or provide informed consent, the health care facility shall enter both physician's evaluations in the principal's medical record. If the principal has designated a health care surrogate or has delegated authority to make health care decisions to an attorney in fact under a durable power of attorney, the facility shall

notify such surrogate or attorney in fact in writing that her or his authority under the instrument has commenced, as provided in chapter 709 or s. 765.203.

(3) The surrogate's authority shall commence upon a determination under subsection (2) that the principal lacks capacity, and such authority shall remain in effect until a determination that the principal has regained such capacity. Upon commencement of the surrogate's authority, a surrogate who is not the principal's spouse shall notify the principal's spouse or adult children of the principal's designation of the surrogate. In the event the attending physician determines that the principal has regained capacity, the authority of the surrogate shall cease, but shall recommence if the principal subsequently loses capacity as determined pursuant to this section.

(4) A determination made pursuant to this section that a principal lacks capacity to make health care decisions shall not be construed as a finding that a principal lacks capacity for any other purpose.

(5) In the event the surrogate is required to consent to withholding or withdrawing life-prolonging procedures, the provisions of part III shall apply.

765.205 Responsibility of the surrogate.

(1) The surrogate, in accordance with the principal's instructions, unless such authority has been expressly limited by the principal, shall:

(a) Have authority to act for the principal and to make all health care decisions for the principal during the principal's incapacity.

(b) Consult expeditiously with appropriate health care providers to provide informed consent, and make only health care decisions for the principal which he or she believes the principal would have made under the circumstances if the principal were capable of making such decisions. If there is no indication of what the principal would have chosen, the surrogate may consider the patient's best interest in deciding that proposed treatments are to be withheld or that treatments currently in effect are to be withdrawn.

(c) Provide written consent using an appropriate form whenever consent is required, including a physician's order not to resuscitate.

(d) Be provided access to the appropriate medical records of the principal.

(e) Apply for public benefits, such as Medicare and Medicaid, for the principal and have access to information regarding the principal's income and assets and banking and financial records to the extent required to make application. A health care provider or facility may not, however, make such application a condition of continued care if the principal, if capable, would have refused to apply.

(2) The surrogate may authorize the release of information and medical records to appropriate persons to ensure the continuity of the principal's health care and may authorize the admission, discharge, or transfer of the principal to or from a health care facility or other facility or program licensed under chapter 400.

(3) If, after the appointment of a surrogate, a court appoints a guardian, the surrogate shall continue to make health care decisions for the principal, unless the court has modified or revoked the authority of the surrogate pursuant to s. 744.3115. The surrogate may be directed by the court to report the principal's health care status to the guardian.

765.401 The proxy.

(1) If an incapacitated or developmentally disabled patient has not executed an advance directive, or designated a surrogate to execute an advance directive, or the designated or alternate surrogate is no longer available to make health care decisions, health care decisions may be made for the patient by any of the following individuals, in the following order of priority, if no individual in a prior class is reasonably available, willing, or competent to act:

(a) The judicially appointed guardian of the patient or the guardian advocate of the person having a developmental disability as defined in s. 393.063, who has been authorized to consent to medical treatment, if such guardian has previously been appointed; however, this paragraph shall not be construed to require such appointment before a treatment decision can be made under this subsection;

(b) The patient's spouse;

(c) An adult child of the patient, or if the patient has more than one adult child, a majority of the adult children who are reasonably available for consultation;

(d) A parent of the patient;

(e) The adult sibling of the patient or, if the patient has more than one sibling, a majority of the adult siblings who are reasonably available for consultation;

(f) An adult relative of the patient who has exhibited special care and concern for the patient and who has maintained regular contact with the patient and who is familiar with the patient's activities, health, and religious or moral beliefs; or

(g) A close friend of the patient.

(h) A clinical social worker licensed pursuant to chapter 491, or who is a graduate of a court-approved guardianship program. Such a proxy must be selected by the provider's bioethics committee and must not be employed by the provider. If the provider does not have a bioethics committee, then such a proxy may be chosen through an arrangement with the bioethics committee of another provider. The proxy will be notified that, upon

request, the provider shall make available a second physician, not involved in the patient's care to assist the proxy in evaluating treatment. Decisions to withhold or withdraw life-prolonging procedures will be reviewed by the facility's bioethics committee. Documentation of efforts to locate proxies from prior classes must be recorded in the patient record.

(2) Any health care decision made under this part must be based on the proxy's informed consent and on the decision the proxy reasonably believes the patient would have made under the circumstances. If there is no indication of what the patient would have chosen, the proxy may consider the patient's best interest in deciding that proposed treatments are to be withheld or that treatments currently in effect are to be withdrawn.

(3) Before exercising the incapacitated patient's rights to select or decline health care, the proxy must comply with the provisions of ss. 765.205 and 765.305, except that a proxy's decision to withhold or withdraw life-prolonging procedures must be supported by clear and convincing evidence that the decision would have been the one the patient would have chosen had the patient been competent or, if there is no indication of what the patient would have chosen, that the decision is in the patient's best interest.

(4) Nothing in this section shall be construed to preempt the designation of persons who may consent to the medical care or treatment of minors established pursuant to s. 743.0645.