

# Patient Advocate Guide

You have been chosen as the Patient Advocate for:

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## What is a Patient Advocate?

A Patient Advocate is someone who is chosen by a person to make medical treatment decisions for that person, when the person can't think or speak for himself or herself. This may happen if the person is very sick or is injured.

To accept the role of Patient Advocate, you must sign a Patient Advocate Acceptance form.

## What Does a Patient Advocate Do?

The Patient Advocate makes medical treatment decisions for a person, based on that person's wishes and what you think the person would do if he or she could tell you. The person may tell you his or her wishes, or write them down.

Being chosen as the Patient Advocate means the person has a lot of trust in you to act for him or her.

A Patient Advocate should discuss with the patient their individual goals, values and beliefs. The Patient Advocate should be able to set aside his or her own beliefs when necessary to honor the wishes of the patient.

*Some important things to think about are:*

- Am I willing to be the Patient Advocate?
- Do I know medical choices the person would want?
- Can I make medical choices that the person would want even if I do not agree with them?
- Am I able to make these medical choices even if it is very hard to do?

## When Do I Make Decisions for the Person?

The person must be defined by a doctor to no longer be able to make a medical treatment decision. Two doctors or a doctor and a psychologist must agree that the person can't make his or her own medical treatment decisions.

If the patient is no longer able to make his or her own medical treatment decisions, it does not mean you will always be able to be to make health care decisions. The patient may get back his or her decision-making ability.

## How Can I Prepare?

It is helpful to talk with the person who chose you, so that you can make medical choices that you are know the person would want.

*You may ask the person questions like:*

- What is important to you to live well?
- What does quality of life mean to you?
- What would make life not worth living?