



What is an advance directive?

An advance directive is a way for you to ensure that your wishes about health care and treatment will be carried out if you are unable to do so yourself.

There are different types of advance directives. The legally preferred type of advance directive in Massachusetts is called a health care proxy.

What is a health care proxy?

A health care proxy is a legal document that allows you to choose a person you know and trust to be your health care agent. This agent makes health care decisions for you only if you are unable to do so yourself. It is a way to plan for the possibility of accidents or illness.

How do I name an agent to make decisions on my behalf?

If you are 18 or older, you will be asked if you have a health care proxy during check-in at the hospital.

If you do not have a health care proxy, you will be asked if you would like information on appointing a health care proxy.

Once I fill out the form, where is it kept?

The form is placed in your electronic medical record. You should also keep a copy for yourself and give a copy to your health care agent. If you have a question about whether your proxy is up to date, call the Admitting Department at 617-355-6644.

What happens if I regain my ability to make decisions for myself?

The proxy is not in effect if you regain the ability to make decisions.

How do I change my proxy?

You can fill out a new proxy form and tell your agent and health care providers that you changed your proxy.

Can my proxy be cancelled?

Your proxy is cancelled:

- Once you sign a new form
- If you are married and legally separate or divorce your spouse who is named as your agent
- If you tell your agent and providers that you want to cancel your proxy (either verbally or in writing)
- If you destroy your proxy by tearing it up, crossing it out or otherwise rescinding it

For more information:

[www.massmed.org/Patient-Care/Health-Topics/Health-Care-Proxies-and-End-of-Life-Care/Massachusetts-Health-Care-Proxy---Information,-Instructions-and-Form-\(pdf\)](http://www.massmed.org/Patient-Care/Health-Topics/Health-Care-Proxies-and-End-of-Life-Care/Massachusetts-Health-Care-Proxy---Information,-Instructions-and-Form-(pdf))
or call Admitting at 617-355-6644 or a Social Worker at 617-355-7965.

This Family Education Sheet is available in Arabic and Spanish.