# Legal documents every family should know

Plain-language overview of powers of attorney, health care surrogates and living wills in Florida.

## Common documents

- **Durable power of attorney:** lets a trusted person handle finances and legal matters.
- **Designation of health care surrogate:** names who makes medical decisions if your loved one can't.
- **Living will:** states wishes about life-prolonging care. The Florida Attorney General publishes a sample: Living will form (PDF).
- **HIPAA authorization:** lets doctors share information with named family members.
- **Guardianship:** a court process used when no documents exist and a person can't decide safely.

These documents must be signed while the person can understand them. An elder-law attorney can prepare and review them. Florida Bar lawyer referral: 1-800-342-8011.

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