

# END OF LIFE DIRECTIVES: CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE COURSE

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In the last quarter century, we have written a number of articles about legislative and court decisions concerning end of life directives. In reviewing this material, it is clear that an individual is presented with many alternatives and options upon which decisions must be made on an informed, individual basis. To that end, a review of the various options could be helpful.

- o **Durable Power of Attorney (as revised in 2010)**: This is a very useful and important document that gives another person the power and authority to manage someone's financial affairs particularly when one is disabled.
- o **Last Will and Testament**: This is an individual's formal, written directive as to how and by whom his estate is to be distributed upon his death. It is also used to, if applicable, designate a guardian of minor children.
- o **Health Care Proxy**: This document enables an individual to designate a particular person(s) to make health care decisions on his/her behalf.
- o **HIPAA Authorization**: This document authorizes the dissemination of an individual's personal health related information to particular persons such as a health care proxy.



- o **Living Will**: A Living Will is an individual's written directive that informs and complements the health care proxy (e.g. not to be placed on life support) and will supersede any contrary directions that may be given by the proxy.
- o **MOLST (Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment)**: This directive is prepared in conjunction with a doctor to document an individual's preferences for end-of-life care and life sustaining treatment. This form is approved for use as a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) form that is relied upon by EMTs and other emergency health professionals in the field.
- o **Disposition of Decedent's Remains**: This relatively new document enables an individual to designate a particular person(s) to make arrangements and decisions concerning disposition of the individual's body upon death.

The above directives are available under the Union's Legal Services Plan not only to you, the member, but also to your spouse, your parents and your spouse's parents at no cost. If you wish to turn your attention to this subject, an appointment can be readily scheduled with an attorney to review your current directives and discuss the applicability of these end of life directives.