

CALIFORNIA PROBATE CODE
Sections 4600-4678, 4695-4698, and 4735-4736

Section 4600. This division may be cited as the Health Care Decisions Law.

Section 4603. Unless the provision or context otherwise requires, the definitions in this chapter govern the construction of this division.

Section 4605. "Advance health care directive" or "advance directive" means either an individual health care instruction or a power of attorney for health care.

Section 4607. (a) "Agent" means an individual designated in a power of attorney for health care to make a health care decision for the principal, regardless of whether the person is known as an agent or attorney-in-fact, or by some other term.

(b) "Agent" includes a successor or alternate agent.

Section 4609. "Capacity" means a person's ability to understand the nature and consequences of a decision and to make and communicate a decision, and includes in the case of proposed health care, the ability to understand its significant benefits, risks, and alternatives.

Section 4611. "Community care facility" means a "community care facility" as defined in Section 1502 of the Health and Safety Code.

Section 4613. "Conservator" means a court-appointed conservator having authority to make a health care decision for a patient.

Section 4615. "Health care" means any care, treatment, service, or procedure to maintain, diagnose, or otherwise affect a patient's physical or mental condition.

Section 4617. "Health care decision" means a decision made by a patient or the patient's agent, conservator, or surrogate, regarding the patient's health care, including the following:

(a) Selection and discharge of health care providers and institutions.

(b) Approval or disapproval of diagnostic tests, surgical procedures, and programs of medication.

(c) Directions to provide, withhold, or withdraw artificial nutrition and hydration and all other forms of health care, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Section 4619. "Health care institution" means an institution, facility, or agency licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized or permitted by law to provide health care in the ordinary course of business.

Section 4621. "Health care provider" means an individual licensed, certified, or otherwise authorized or permitted by the law of this state to provide health care in the ordinary course of business or practice of a profession.

Section 4623. "Individual health care instruction" or "individual instruction" means a patient's written or oral direction concerning a health care decision for the patient.

Section 4625. "Patient" means an adult whose health care is under consideration, and includes a principal under a power of attorney for health care and an adult who has given an individual health care instruction or designated a surrogate.

Section 4627. "Physician" means a physician and surgeon licensed by the Medical Board of California or the Osteopathic Medical Board of California.

Section 4629. "Power of attorney for health care" means a written instrument designating an agent to make health care decisions for the principal.

Section 4631. "Primary physician" means a physician designated by a patient or the patient's agent, conservator, or surrogate, to have primary responsibility for the patient's health care or, in the absence of a designation or if the designated physician is not reasonably available or declines to act as primary physician, a physician who undertakes the responsibility.

Section 4633. "Principal" means an adult who executes a power of attorney for health care.

Section 4635. "Reasonably available" means readily able to be contacted without undue effort and willing and able to act in a timely manner considering the urgency of the patient's health care needs.

Section 4637. "Residential care facility for the elderly" means a "residential care facility for the elderly" as defined in Section 1569.2 of the Health and Safety Code.

Section 4639. "Skilled nursing facility" means a "skilled nursing facility" as defined in Section 1250 of the Health and Safety Code.

Section 4641. "Supervising health care provider" means the primary physician or, if there is no primary physician or the primary physician is not reasonably available, the health care provider who has undertaken primary responsibility for a patient's health care.

Section 4643. "Surrogate" means an adult, other than a patient's agent or conservator, authorized under this division to make a health care decision for the patient.

Section 4650. The Legislature finds the following:

(a) In recognition of the dignity and privacy a person has a right to expect, the law recognizes that an adult has the fundamental right to control the decisions relating to his or her own health care, including the decision to have life-sustaining treatment withheld or withdrawn.

(b) Modern medical technology has made possible the artificial prolongation of human life beyond natural limits. In the interest of protecting individual autonomy, this prolongation of the process of dying for a person for whom continued health care does not improve the prognosis for recovery may violate patient dignity and cause unnecessary pain and suffering, while providing nothing medically necessary or beneficial to the person.

(c) In the absence of controversy, a court is normally not the proper forum in which to make health care decisions, including decisions regarding life-sustaining treatment.

Section 4651. (a) Except as otherwise provided, this division applies to health care decisions for adults who lack capacity to make health care decisions for themselves.

(b) This division does not affect any of the following:

(1) The right of an individual to make health care decisions while having the capacity to do so.

(2) The law governing health care in an emergency.

(3) The law governing health care for unemancipated minors.

Section 4652. This division does not authorize consent to any of the following on behalf of a patient:

(a) Commitment to or placement in a mental health treatment facility.

(b) Convulsive treatment (as defined in Section 5325 of the Welfare and Institutions Code).

(c) Psychosurgery (as defined in Section 5325 of the Welfare and Institutions Code).

(d) Sterilization.

(e) Abortion.

Section 4653. Nothing in this division shall be construed to condone, authorize, or approve mercy killing, assisted suicide, or euthanasia. This division is not intended to permit any affirmative or deliberate act or omission to end life other than withholding or withdrawing health care pursuant to an advance health care directive, by a surrogate, or as otherwise provided, so as to permit the natural process of dying.

Section 4654. This division does not authorize or require a health care provider or health care institution to provide health care contrary to generally accepted health care standards applicable to the health care provider or health care institution.

Section 4655. (a) This division does not create a presumption concerning the intention of a patient who has not made or who has revoked an advance health care directive.

(b) In making health care decisions under this division, a patient's attempted suicide shall not be construed to indicate a desire of the patient that health care be restricted or inhibited.

Section 4656. Death resulting from withholding or withdrawing health care in accordance with this division does not for any purpose constitute a suicide or homicide or legally impair or invalidate a policy of insurance or an annuity providing a death benefit, notwithstanding any term of the policy or annuity to the contrary.

Section 4657. A patient is presumed to have the capacity to make a health care decision, to give or revoke an advance health care directive, and to designate or disqualify a surrogate. This presumption is a presumption affecting the burden of proof.

Section 4658. Unless otherwise specified in a written advance health care directive, for the purposes of this division, a determination that a patient lacks or has recovered capacity, or that another condition exists that affects an individual health care instruction or the authority of an agent or surrogate, shall be made by the primary physician.

Section 4659. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), none of the following persons may make health care decisions as an agent under a power of attorney for health care or a surrogate under this division:

(1) The supervising health care provider or an employee of the health care institution where the patient is receiving care.

(2) An operator or employee of a community care facility or residential care facility where the patient is receiving care.

(b) The prohibition in subdivision (a) does not apply to the following persons:

(1) An employee, other than the supervising health care provider, who is related to the patient by blood, marriage, or adoption, or is a registered domestic partner of the patient.

(2) An employee, other than the supervising health care provider, who is employed by the same health care institution, community care facility, or residential care facility for the elderly as the patient.

(c) A conservator under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (Part 1 (commencing with Section 5000) of Division 5 of the Welfare and Institutions Code) may not be

designated as an agent or surrogate to make health care decisions by the conservatee, unless all of the following are satisfied:

- (1) The advance health care directive is otherwise valid.
- (2) The conservatee is represented by legal counsel.
- (3) The lawyer representing the conservatee signs a certificate stating in substance:

"I am a lawyer authorized to practice law in the state where this advance health care directive was executed, and the principal or patient was my client at the time this advance directive was executed. I have advised my client concerning his or her rights in connection with this advance directive and the applicable law and the consequences of signing or not signing this advance directive, and my client, after being so advised, has executed this advance directive."

Section 4660. A copy of a written advance health care directive, revocation of an advance directive, or designation or disqualification of a surrogate has the same effect as the original.

Section 4665. Except as otherwise provided by statute:

(a) On and after July 1, 2000, this division applies to all advance health care directives, including, but not limited to, durable powers of attorney for health care and declarations under the Natural Death Act (former Chapter 3.9 (commencing with Section 7185) of Part 1 of Division 7 of the Health and Safety Code), regardless of whether they were given or executed before, on, or after July 1, 2000.

(b) This division applies to all proceedings concerning advance health care directives commenced on or after July 1, 2000.

(c) This division applies to all proceedings concerning written advance health care directives commenced before July 1, 2000, unless the court determines that application of a particular provision of this division would substantially interfere with the effective conduct of the proceedings or the rights of the parties and other interested persons, in which case the particular provision of this division does not apply and prior law applies.

(d) Nothing in this division affects the validity of an advance health care directive executed before July 1, 2000, that was valid under prior law.

(e) Nothing in this division affects the validity of a durable power of attorney for health care executed on a printed form that was valid under prior law, regardless of whether execution occurred before, on, or after July 1, 2000.

Section 4670. An adult having capacity may give an individual health care instruction. The individual instruction may be oral or written. The individual instruction may be limited to take effect only if a specified condition arises.

Section 4671. (a) An adult having capacity may execute a power of attorney for health care, as provided in Article 2 (commencing with Section 4680). The power

of attorney for health care may authorize the agent to make health care decisions and may also include individual health care instructions.

(b) The principal in a power of attorney for health care may grant authority to make decisions relating to the personal care of the principal, including, but not limited to, determining where the principal will live, providing meals, hiring household employees, providing transportation, handling mail, and arranging recreation and entertainment.

Section 4672. (a) A written advance health care directive may include the individual's nomination of a conservator of the person or estate or both, or a guardian of the person or estate or both, for consideration by the court if protective proceedings for the individual's person or estate are thereafter commenced.

(b) If the protective proceedings are conservatorship proceedings in this state, the nomination has the effect provided in Section 1810 and the court shall give effect to the most recent writing executed in accordance with Section 1810, whether or not the writing is a written advance health care directive.

Section 4673. A written advance health care directive is legally sufficient if all of the following requirements are satisfied:

(a) The advance directive contains the date of its execution.

(b) The advance directive is signed either (1) by the patient or (2) in the patient's name by another adult in the patient's presence and at the patient's direction.

(c) The advance directive is either (1) acknowledged before a notary public or (2) signed by at least two witnesses who satisfy the requirements of Sections 4674 and 4675.

Section 4674. If the written advance health care directive is signed by witnesses, as provided in Section 4673, the following requirements shall be satisfied:

(a) The witnesses shall be adults.

(b) Each witness signing the advance directive shall witness either the signing of the advance directive by the patient or the patient's acknowledgment of the signature or the advance directive.

(c) None of the following persons may act as a witness:

(1) The patient's health care provider or an employee of the patient's health care provider.

(2) The operator or an employee of a community care facility.

(3) The operator or an employee of a residential care facility for the elderly.

(4) The agent, where the advance directive is a power of attorney for health care.

(d) Each witness shall make the following declaration in substance:

"I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of California (1) that the individual who signed or acknowledged this advance health care directive is personally known to me, or that the individual's identity was proven to me by

convincing evidence, (2) that the individual signed or acknowledged this advance directive in my presence, (3) that the individual appears to be of sound mind and under no duress, fraud, or undue influence, (4) that I am not a person appointed as agent by this advance directive, and (5) that I am not the individual's health care provider, an employee of the individual's health care provider, the operator of a community care facility, an employee of an operator of a community care facility, the operator of a residential care facility for the elderly, nor an employee of an operator of a residential care facility for the elderly."

(e) At least one of the witnesses shall be an individual who is neither related to the patient by blood, marriage, or adoption, nor entitled to any portion of the patient's estate upon the patient's death under a will existing when the advance directive is executed or by operation of law then existing.

(f) The witness satisfying the requirement of subdivision (e) shall also sign the following declaration in substance:

"I further declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of California that I am not related to the individual executing this advance health care directive by blood, marriage, or adoption, and, to the best of my knowledge, I am not entitled to any part of the individual's estate upon his or her death under a will now existing or by operation of law."

(g) The provisions of this section applicable to witnesses do not apply to a notary public before whom an advance health care directive is acknowledged.

Section 4675. (a) If an individual is a patient in a skilled nursing facility when a written advance health care directive is executed, the advance directive is not effective unless a patient advocate or ombudsman, as may be designated by the Department of Aging for this purpose pursuant to any other applicable provision of law, signs the advance directive as a witness, either as one of two witnesses or in addition to notarization. The patient advocate or ombudsman shall declare that he or she is serving as a witness as required by this subdivision. It is the intent of this subdivision to recognize that some patients in skilled nursing facilities are insulated from a voluntary decisionmaking role, by virtue of the custodial nature of their care, so as to require special assurance that they are capable of willfully and voluntarily executing an advance directive.

(b) A witness who is a patient advocate or ombudsman may rely on the representations of the administrators or staff of the skilled nursing facility, or of family members, as convincing evidence of the identity of the patient if the patient advocate or ombudsman believes that the representations provide a reasonable basis for determining the identity of the patient.

Section 4676. (a) A written advance health care directive or similar instrument executed in another state or jurisdiction in compliance with the laws of that state or jurisdiction or of this state, is valid and enforceable in this state to the same extent as a written advance directive validly executed in this state.

(b) In the absence of knowledge to the contrary, a physician or other health care provider may presume that a written advance health care directive or similar instrument, whether executed in another state or jurisdiction or in this state, is valid.

Section 4677. A health care provider, health care service plan, health care institution, disability insurer, self-insured employee welfare plan, or nonprofit hospital plan or a similar insurance plan may not require or prohibit the execution or revocation of an advance health care directive as a condition for providing health care, admission to a facility, or furnishing insurance.

Section 4678. Unless otherwise specified in an advance health care directive, a person then authorized to make health care decisions for a patient has the same rights as the patient to request, receive, examine, copy, and consent to the disclosure of medical or any other health care information.

Section 4695. (a) A patient having capacity may revoke the designation of an agent only by a signed writing or by personally informing the supervising health care provider.

(b) A patient having capacity may revoke all or part of an advance health care directive, other than the designation of an agent, at any time and in any manner that communicates an intent to revoke.

Section 4696. A health care provider, agent, conservator, or surrogate who is informed of a revocation of an advance health care directive shall promptly communicate the fact of the revocation to the supervising health care provider and to any health care institution where the patient is receiving care.

Section 4697. (a) If after executing a power of attorney for health care the principal's marriage to the agent is dissolved or annulled, the principal's designation of the former spouse as an agent to make health care decisions for the principal is revoked.

(b) If the agent's authority is revoked solely by subdivision (a), it is revived by the principal's remarriage to the agent.

Section 4698. An advance health care directive that conflicts with an earlier advance directive revokes the earlier advance directive to the extent of the conflict.

Section 4735. A health care provider or health care institution may decline to comply with an individual health care instruction or health care decision that requires medically ineffective health care or health care contrary to generally accepted health care standards applicable to the health care provider or institution.

Section 4736. A health care provider or health care institution that declines to comply with an individual health care instruction or health care decision shall do all of the following:

(a) Promptly so inform the patient, if possible, and any person then authorized to make health care decisions for the patient.

(b) Unless the patient or person then authorized to make health care decisions for the patient refuses assistance, immediately make all reasonable efforts to assist in the transfer of the patient to another health care provider or institution that is willing to comply with the instruction or decision.

(c) Provide continuing care to the patient until a transfer can be accomplished or until it appears that a transfer cannot be accomplished. In all cases, appropriate pain relief and other palliative care shall be continued.