

## Decision Making

This brochure explains what happens when you are too sick to make your own choices about your health care.

A Substitute Decision Maker (SDM) makes healthcare choices for a patient when they cannot. Patients can appoint a proxy to make decisions for them when they are not able to themselves and can create a Health Care Directive (HCD) to make their wishes known and inform SDM decisions. If a patient cannot speak for themselves, Saskatchewan law says choices will be made for you by the following:

- A proxy you have appointed;
- If a proxy is not appointed, but there is a legal guardian, they become SDM;
- If no proxy or personal guardian exist, your nearest relative becomes the SDM; and
- If none of the above, two health care professionals can make the healthcare decision.

### SHA Advance Care Planning Program

Serving Saskatchewan  
with offices in Saskatoon & Regina

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## What is a Substitute Decision Maker (SDM)?

No one can predict the future.

Even if you make a Health Care Directive, with instructions for your future healthcare, it is still important to have a Proxy. Your instructions may not include everything that may happen to you but your Proxy should know what is important to you and be able to tell the health care team what you would want.

Your Substitute Decision Maker is your voice when you cannot speak for yourself.

Decisions made on your behalf include your Health Care Directive and everything your SDM knows about you and how you want to live your life.

You can appoint a proxy on any template or write it out on a piece of paper. You can include it as part of your Advance Care Plan or do it separately. As long as you sign and date it, it is legal.

**THINK** about what you want.

**LEARN** about your health.

**DECIDE** who you want to speak for you.

**APPOINT** a proxy.

**TALK** to those closest to you about what is important to you.

**RECORD** - write it down, sign, and date it.

**You can change your mind at anytime as long as you can still make your own decisions.**



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Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan



CS-PIER-0001

## What is a Proxy or Substitute Decision Maker



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## Values and Joy

What we value is reflected in what makes us happy and brings us joy. Think about what makes you happy every day and how you like to live your life.

The answers to these thoughts are important to share with your SDM. Your SDM may have difficult feelings about your choices when they need to make health care decision for you. That is normal. Talking with your SDM about your answers to these and other questions will help them know what you want when they need to speak for you.

Some things to talk with your SDM about and to include in your instructions might be:

Would you suffer for a chance to live longer? If so how much?

What if you need someone to care for you like: to feed you; dress you; to help you go to the bathroom

What if you cannot recognize or have a conversation with friends and family.

What if you cannot go home?

Would you agree to a tube feed if you cannot eat or swallow? Would you agree to a tube feed for a short time or long time?

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.

## Who Can Speak for You?

### Proxy

A proxy is an adult **you trust, ask, and who agrees** to make medical choices for you if are not able to.

To be legal, write down who you want as your proxy, sign and date what you have written, and give your proxy or SDM a copy.

**Proxy is not the same as a Power of Attorney**

### Legal Guardian

An adult who is worried a person cannot look after themselves can ask to become their legal guardian.

They would go to court to ask a judge to become their guardian.

### Nearest Relative

A nearest relative is an adult who makes medical choices if a proxy was not appointed and there is not a guardian.

The law has a list of family members to ask in order starting with the oldest.

**Only biological and legally adopted family are included**

### Health Care Professionals

**If there is no one else to make decisions, two health care professionals will decide for you.**

- Legal spouse / common law partner
- Child
- Parent
- Sibling
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- Aunt /uncle
- Nephew / niece

#### Remember...

a nearest relative is not the same as next of kin. It is easy to mix these up but they have very different roles.

**Appoint a proxy and make your Health Care Directive when you are healthy and well.**

**Talk about what is important to you in case you lose the chance.**

**Wallet Card:** Complete all sections of this card. Keep it with your Saskatchewan Health Services Card.

Other Important Contacts:

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Other important Information:

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I, \_\_\_\_\_, (Print Name Clearly) Have written a health care directive and have spoken with my proxy about my health care decisions. A copy of this plan is located at:

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My Proxy is: \_\_\_\_\_

Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: This is not intended to be a proxy appointment**