



Planning for the Future: Advance Care Planning

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What is Advance Care Planning?

- Advance Care Planning – The process of sharing your wishes for your future healthcare treatment
- Involves:
 - Creating a Healthcare Directive
 - Assigning a Proxy or Substitute Decision-Maker



Steps to Advance Care Planning

- **THINK**
 - What is important to you?
 - What do you know about your health?
 - TOOL: What Matters Most to Me Workbook
- **LEARN**
 - About your health, medical treatments, and options
 - TOOL: Guide to Talking with your Healthcare Team
- **DECIDE**
 - Who will speak for you when you can't speak for yourself?
 - TOOL: Appoint a Proxy in the My Voice Workbook
- **TALK**
 - With people close to you and your healthcare team
 - TOOL: Use the Conversation Starter Guide
- **RECORD**
 - Your wishes
 - TOOL: My Voice Workbook to create a Health Care Directive

(Saskatoon Health Authority, 2025)



Healthcare Directive

- A document that indicates your wishes for healthcare should you not be able to voice your own wishes due to illness or injury
- You make your directive by writing it down, signing and dating it
 - It is suggested that it be witnessed as not all provinces will accept it if it is not
 - TOOL: My Voice Workbook or other available templates

**YOU can change your mind at any time as long as you
can still make your own decisions**

(Saskatoon Health Authority, 2025)



Yellow Sleeves

- The Saskatchewan Health Authority instituted yellow sleeves last year
- For persons living outside of institutional care a yellow sleeve helps first responders and other members of your medical team to know your wishes
- Using your yellow sleeve
 - Order one online or by phone
 - Put all relevant documentation in it
 - Place it on or near your fridge (that is where emergency personal will be looking for it)



How Do I Get a Yellow Sleeve?

Call 1-833-544-2255

or

Email advancecareplanningprgm@saskhealthauthority.ca

Or

Visit <https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/your-health/conditions-diseases-services/advance-care-planning>

Advance Care
Planning
Program
Website



For More Information or to Get a Yellow Sleeve

SHA Advance Care Planning Program

(306) 766-5922 or Toll free 1 (833) 544-2255

Advancecareplanningprgm@saskhealthauthority.ca

<https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/your-health/conditions-diseases-services/advance-care-planning>



Take a Moment to Ponder

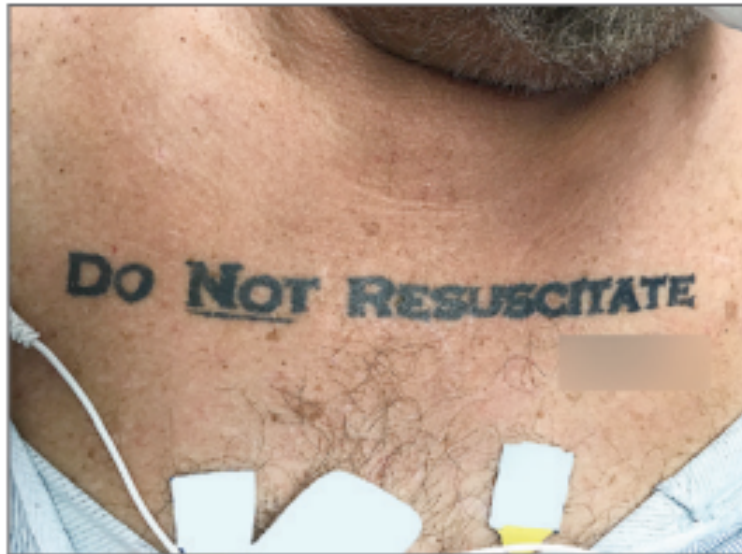


Figure 1. Photograph of the Patient's Tattoo Entered into the Medical Record to Document His Perceived End-of-Life Wishes.

This patient's presumed signature has been masked.

- Have you ever thought of having a DNR tattoo? If yes, why have you not had it done?
- If someone was admitted with a DNR tattoo, what would you ask them about the tattoo?

(Holt et al., 2017, p. 2192)

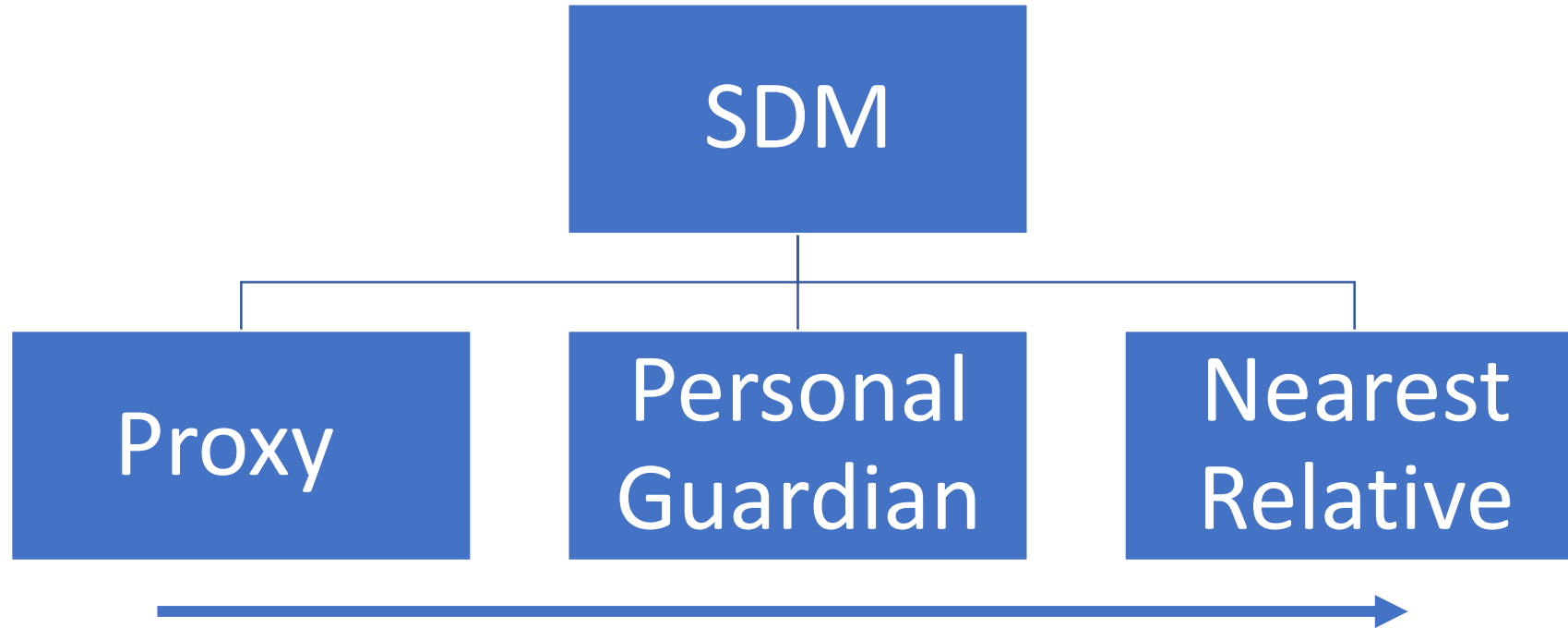


Substitute Decision Maker

- Substitute Decision Maker – Your voice when you cannot speak for yourself
- Your Substitute Decision Maker must
 - Be 18 years of age or older
 - Be Legally Competent
 - Agree to take on the role



Who is a Substitute Decision Maker?



Types of Substitute Decision Makers

Proxies

- An adult you *trust, ask and who agrees* to make medical choices for you if you are not able to

Legal Guardian

- An adult who is granted status by the court to act as a substitute decision maker

Nearest Relative

- An adult who makes medical decisions in the absence of a proxy or legal guardian

Health Care Professionals

- If no one can make decisions for you two healthcare professionals will



Who is Proxy?

Proxy

**Proxy is
Not a
Power of
Attorney**

An adult 18 years or older who is appointed by a individual to make health care choices when the individual is not able to

You cannot designate a proxy for someone else



To be considered legal the proxy appointment must be:

Written , Signed, Dated



A proxy is someone who knows and understands what an individual would want

An individual has conversations with their proxy about what is important to them and what their wishes are when they cannot speak for themselves

What is the Nearest Relative List?

Nearest Relative

Nearest Relative List

- Legal spouse / cohabitates as a spouse
- Child
- Parent
- Sibling
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- Aunt/uncle
- Nephew/niece

The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision makers Act says the nearest relative list is used for decision making when there is no proxy or guardian appointed

The list is in chronological order, meaning you start at the top and work your way down until there is a nearest relative who is willing, available, and able

The oldest in each category is approached first, and only considers biological and adoptive relationships; no cousins or blended family members

Types of Proxies

- You can assign more than one proxy
- If you have chosen more than one proxy they can either be instructed to work together or separately
 - Jointly – proxies work together to make decisions, if they cannot agree then there are rules for how a decision is made
 - Succession – The first person listed makes decisions unless they are unable or willing to do so, then the next person listed will be engaged



Responsibilities of a Substitute Decision Maker

- Be available to be part of the decision-making process
- Follow the rules (you are guided by)
 - A Healthcare Directive if there is one
 - A consideration of what the person sees as important (what brings them joy)
 - What you think is best for them (if you don't know what they would want)
- You should be focused on the person you are making decisions on behalf of and what they want not what you would want for yourself. Different people have different values



Decision-Making Process



(Hummel, 2016)



Planning ahead (or how to make your substitute decision maker's life easier)

- Create a Healthcare Directive
- Have the awkward conversations (and have them often; believe it or not they become less awkward)
 - What do you value?
 - What would you want if...?
 - What might be challenging for your substitute decision maker?
- Make sure your medical team knows who your substitute decision maker is and involve them early
- Revisit proxy assignments



References

Holt, G. E., Sarmiento, B., Kett, D., & Goodman, K. W. (2017). An unconscious patient with a DNR tattoo. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 377(22), 2192-2193. doi:10.1056/NEJMc1713344

Hummel, F. I. (2016). Powerlessness. In P. D. Larsen (Ed.), *Lubkin's chronic illness. Impact and intervention* (9th ed., pp. 261-288). Jones & Bartlett Learning.

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