

EMPATH
CHOICES
FOR CARE



The Role of the Health Care Surrogate

*“Are You Ready to be a
Good One?”*

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Objectives

- Discuss what a healthcare surrogate is and what responsibilities are involved with this role
- Explore techniques to help you become a better health care decision-maker
- Describe strategies for getting support from others when you need it

Terms

Healthcare Surrogate

- a trusted person chosen by an individual to make medical decisions upon incapacity

Healthcare Proxy

- an adult who has not been expressly designated but is authorized to make health care decisions (absence of HCS)

Terms

Durable Power of Attorney

- *Durable*, meaning it is not affected if a person becomes incapacitated and it lasts until the death of the person who gave it
- Only for financial unless medical is specifically spelled out in DPOA
- FL has HCS, some states have DPOA /Healthcare

FACT

Not making a decision
IS
making a decision

Florida law will appoint someone to act

- Spouse
- Adult child(ren)
- Parent(s)
- Adult sibling
- Adult relative
- Close friend
- Clinical social worker

Court
Appointed
Guardian

What makes a Good HCS?

- Able
- Willing
- Local, preferably
- Not intimidated by hospital or physicians
- Will follow your wishes, *even if they disagree*
- Able to ask questions and make decisions
- Is aware of your wishes and values, because you have discussed them
- A strong advocate

Healthcare Surrogate



What else?

- A good HCS knows the patient well and understands what's important to him/her
- He/she must be prepared to respond to conflicting opinions between family and the medical team



What does the surrogate do?

- Makes healthcare treatment decisions
- Takes steps to see that wishes are honored
- Talks to the doctor/health care team
- Authorizes treatment or has it withdrawn per patient wishes
- Has access to medical records
- Can authorize transportation to another facility

What does the surrogate do?

- Authorizing admission or discharge (even against medical advice)
- Applying for public benefits such as Medicare/Medicaid
- Authorizing participation in medical research related to the patient's condition
- Deciding about organ/tissue donations

In Someone Else's Shoes...



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Your Legal Role

- Clearly defined as providing information on what you think the patient would have wanted when a medical decision is contemplated
- Because the patient can change his/her mind...the HCS has the same legal right
- However! There is one important difference

Your Legal Role

- The healthcare surrogate's legal and ethical responsibility is to express **what the patient would have thought** about any medical treatment
- The surrogate cannot express what he himself (or she herself) wants done



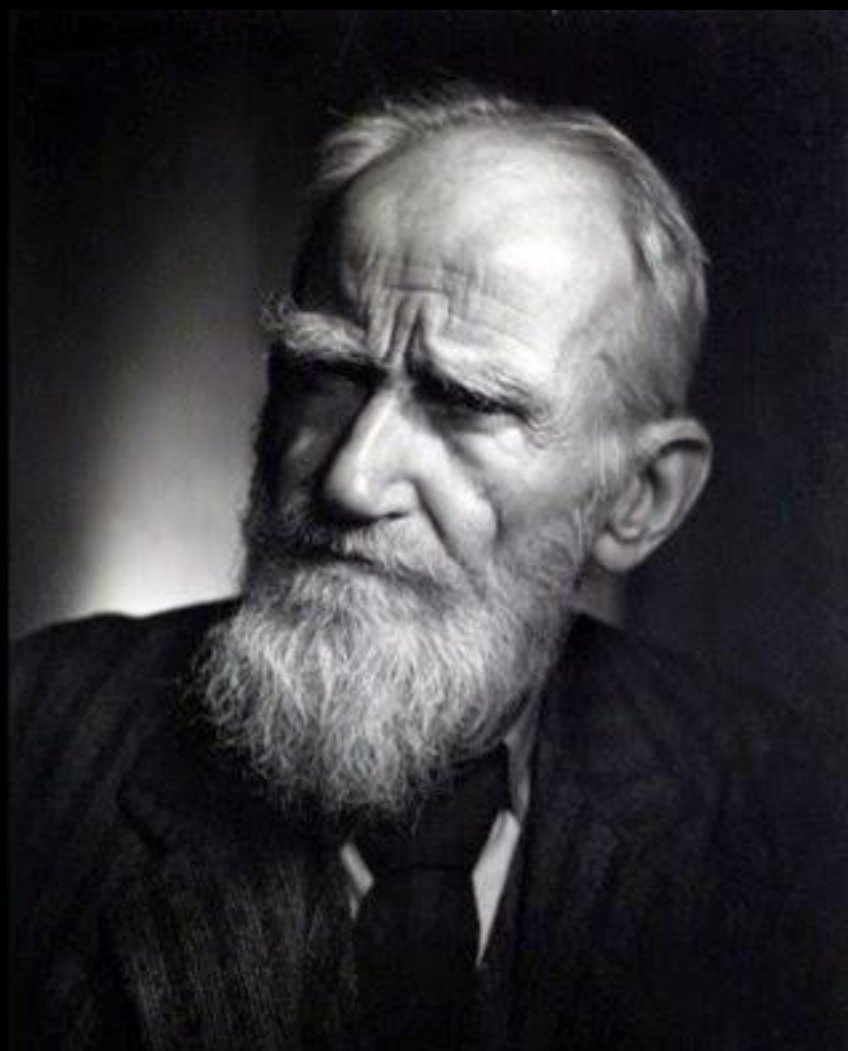
Your Legal Role

- Perhaps the most important reason that surrogates have this right is because patients frequently change their wishes
- Be prepared to discuss your reasons with the physician
- If the patient has decision-making capacity, it doesn't matter what the surrogate says should be done

“

THE SINGLE BIGGEST
PROBLEM
IN COMMUNICATION
IS THE ILLUSION THAT IT
HAS TAKEN PLACE.

- GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



What if I am unsure of his/her preferences?

- Time to start preparing
- Thoughtful conversations
- Learn what is important



What do I need to know?

- How would he/she like to be cared for?
 - What care is wanted
 - What is not wanted
 - How long?
- Discuss quality of life
 - What is important and meaningful?
 - Quality vs. Quantity
 - Fears or worries



Some helpful questions to help you get started

1. What is important to you at this time in your life?
2. What fears or worries do you have about your illness or medical care?
3. If you had to choose between living longer and quality of life, how would you approach this balance?
4. What sustains you when you face serious challenges in your life?
5. Do you have religious or spiritual beliefs that are important to you?

How can I?



How can I make a decision that may
end the life of someone I love?

Remember...

It is the disease that is ending my
loved one's life, not the decision
to withdraw or forego a treatment.



Decision Maker Stress

- It is normal to be stressed and uncertain
- You are not alone
- There are many places to go for help.



Common Sources of Stress & How to Overcome It

- Unsureness about patient's preferences
 - ✓ planning ahead is important
- Discomfort with hospital environment
 - ✓ patient navigator or chaplain
- Logistics in decision-making
 - ✓ give as much time as possible

Common Sources of Stress & How to Overcome It

- Poor communication by clinicians
 - ✓ regularly scheduled conference
- Conflict among family members
 - ✓ consistent communication
- Sense of sole responsibility making life/death decisions
 - ✓ talk through options and make recommendations
- Uncertainty or guilt over decisions
 - ✓ express support

What do I do when my loved one can no longer make decisions?

- Make an appointment with physician
- Make yourself known as the HCS
- Make sure the living will is in the medical chart
- Try having conversations with your loved one
- Advocate on your loved one's behalf

Strategies for Getting Support

- Loved ones who have conferences with physicians are less stressed, anxious, and depressed. (Less likely to have PTSD)
- Ask for an ethics consult if things are getting overwhelming
- Ask for assistance from a faith professional

**Don't be afraid to
“bang a few tables”**






**ARE YOU
READY?**

Our Services

- Assistance for individuals and families
- Professional training courses
- Community and corporate presentations
- Advance directives – free of charge
- Continuing education courses for healthcare, legal and faith professionals
- Resource library



The purpose of **Empath Choices for Care** is to educate and empower people to communicate and document their health care choices so that their wishes are honored.

Expertise, Support & Compassion Every Step of Your Journey

Empath Health is a not-for-profit integrative network of care encompassing hospice, palliative home health and physician services, assistance for independent living and daycare for seniors, services for those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and advance care planning. Additional programs and services are in development.

Empath Health Members Include:

- Suncoast Hospice
- Suncoast Hospice Foundation
- Suncoast PACE
- Suncoast Solutions
- Empath Home Health
- Empath Choices for Care
- AIDS Service Association of Pinellas (ASAP)
- Suncoast Hospice Institute

Your 3 Takeaways Today

1. As a healthcare surrogate you have been chosen for a sacred role
2. Remember you are “wearing someone else’s shoes”
3. There is support for you. Don’t be afraid to ask for it.

Our contact information

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*Thank
You!*