

# Your Substitute Decision Maker(s)

Imagine one day, without warning, you find yourself in a hospital mentally incapable of making healthcare decisions for yourself. Who would speak for you and make health care decisions for you? A Substitute Decision Maker is a person (or people) who will provide consent or refusal of consent for care and treatments for you if you are not mentally capable to do that for yourself. Advance Care Planning includes confirming or deciding on a Substitute Decision Maker as well as expressing your values and wishes about care that you may want or not want in the future. Research has shown that if you talk to your Substitute Decision Maker(s) about your values and wishes for future healthcare, it helps to relieve the stress and anxiety they may feel if they are asked to make decisions on your behalf.



A Power of Attorney for Personal Care is a document, in writing, in which you name someone to act on your behalf and have the legal authority to do so.

To be legal, the document must be signed by:

- You, in the presence of two witnesses
- The two witnesses in front of you (Witnesses cannot be your spouse, partner or child)

You must sign it of your own free will.

You must be mentally capable to understand and appreciate what you are signing and what you are doing by signing such a document.

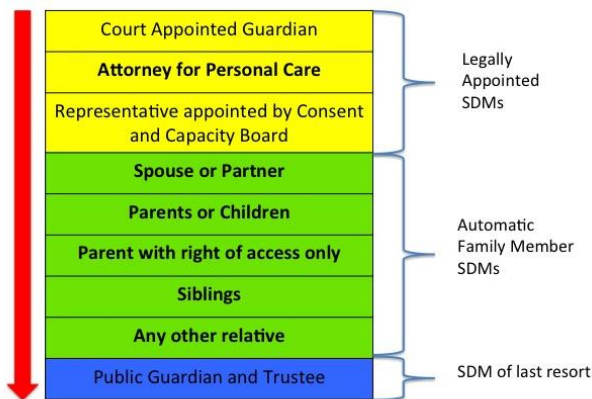
Your Substitute Decision Maker(s) must be mentally capable and at least 16 years old. They must be willing and available to take on this task. There must not be any legal reasons stopping them from doing this.

You do not have to see a lawyer to do a Power of Attorney for Personal Care – of course you can if you prefer.

You can get the form to fill out from the Government of Ontario at 1-800-366-0335 or [www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca](http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca)

**You can find more information at:**

[www.SpeakUpOntario.ca](http://www.SpeakUpOntario.ca)



Ontario Health Care Consent Act, 1996

In Ontario, the law provides you with an automatic Substitute Decision Maker based on a ranking hierarchy. For example, this might be your spouse or your child/children.

If you want someone other than the highest ranked person on the list to make decisions on your behalf, you must complete a Power of Attorney for Personal Care document to appoint that person.

