

Health Care Power of Attorney—Why Do I Need One?

Before we can answer that question, we need to define this essential Estate Planning tool:

Health Care Power of Attorney (“HCPOA”)— a document in which the maker designates a trusted individual to represent him/her with regard to medical decisions and care.



Ineffective unless you can no longer communicate

- Worried about giving someone power of this nature? Consider the following:
 - * The power only kicks in when you can no longer speak—as long as you can exercise your voice, your HCPOA remains on the sideline.
 - * Often times the correct decision is a “no-brainer”—the doctor is looking for an authorized person to give consent to a highly advisable course of action. This can substantially speed up the process!

Someone close to you can represent your best interests

- While most often the correct medical decision verges on “black and white,” close family members or friends will be able to provide the medical staff valuable context.
- Your HCPOA may be aware of personal wishes and values that the doctor isn’t privy to, and be able to advocate for you to ensure the care *you* would’ve chosen for yourself.

“End of life” decisions are still yours!

- The perception exists that if you sign over a HCPOA, that person has the ultimate decision as to whether or not to “pull the plug” on you.
- **Wiley Etter, LLC** offers a separate Living Will, which is your directive to the doctor to end life sustaining measures if/when you’re deemed to be permanently braindead, and can no longer appreciate a meaningful life. This Living Will trumps the HCPOA with regard to end of life decisions!