

## Durable or General Power of Attorney

**What is the process to obtain a Power of Attorney form so that financial, legal, and non-healthcare matters can be handled by someone I trust while I'm in the hospital or if I ever become incapacitated and am unable to handle these matters on my own?**

You, or someone you designate (family member or friend), are responsible for obtaining appropriate Power of Attorney documents. The hospital does not maintain these forms since there are so many variations available and we can not recommend one document over another. Since these documents are generally for matters outside of the hospital, we ask that patients or their family members choose a form that meets their individual needs.

Durable Power of Attorney forms which identify a decision maker related to medical decision-making (as part of a Medical Advance Directive) are available to patients and their families in the hospital. To obtain a form, you may ask your nurse.

There are three main options available for where you can obtain copies of these documents:

- An attorney
- On the internet. There are many sites where you can download Power of Attorney documents for a minimal fee. Our Medical Library has several computers available for public use if you would like to conduct an online search for an appropriate document while at the hospital. We are unable to recommend or sponsor any particular sites.
- An office supply store, such as Office Depot, Staples, OfficeMax, etc. will often carry these types of documents.

Staff in the Patient Relations Department can assist patients or their family members with notary services. This service is offered Monday –Friday between the hours of 8:30am –5:00pm. Please contact us in advance to arrange for a notary during those hours. In some instances, we can arrange for notary services after office hours, however, this can not be guaranteed. For all after hours requests, advance notice would be required.

In order for us to provide you with this service, you **must**:

- Produce a photo ID, such as a state-issued driver's license or US passport, for each individual who will be signing the document. Virginia law requires this and we can not make any exceptions to this mandatory requirement.
- Demonstrate that you fully understand what it is that you are signing. This may be determined by a series of questions that the notary may pose before agreeing to notarize the document. The notary can refuse to notarize a document if they do not feel any person does not fully understand what he/ she is signing.
- Sign the document in the presence of the notary. The document should be reviewed before the notary arrives, but should not be signed until the notary is present.

There is no fee for notary services provided for patients or their family members while they are in the hospital.

If you have any questions or would like to arrange for a notary, please call the Patient Relations Department at **(703) 776-3663**.