

§5-806. Decisions by surrogate

1. Decisions by surrogate. A surrogate may make a decision to withhold or withdraw life-sustaining treatment for a patient who is an adult or emancipated minor if the patient has been determined by the primary physician to lack capacity, no agent or guardian has been appointed or the agent or guardian is not reasonably available and the patient is in a terminal condition or a persistent vegetative state as determined by the primary physician.

A surrogate also is authorized to make any other health care decision for a patient who is an adult or emancipated minor if the patient has been determined by the primary physician to lack capacity and no agent or guardian exists, except that a surrogate may not deny surgery, procedures or other interventions that are lifesaving and medically necessary.

A medically necessary procedure is one providing the most patient-appropriate intervention or procedure that can be safely and effectively given.

[PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

2. Priority of who may act as surrogate. Any member of the following classes of the patient's family who is reasonably available, in descending order of priority, may act as surrogate:

A. The spouse, unless legally separated; [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

B. An adult who shares an emotional, physical and financial relationship with the patient similar to that of a spouse; [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

C. An adult child; [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

D. A parent; [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

E. An adult brother or sister; [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

F. An adult grandchild; [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

G. An adult niece or nephew, related by blood or adoption; [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

H. An adult aunt or uncle, related by blood or adoption; or [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

I. Any adult relative of the patient, related by blood or adoption, who is familiar with the patient's personal values and is reasonably available for consultation. [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

[PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

3. Adult who has exhibited special concern. If none of the individuals eligible to act as surrogate under subsection 2 is reasonably available, an adult who has exhibited special concern for the patient, who is familiar with the patient's personal values and who is reasonably available may act as surrogate. [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

4. Communication of assumption of authority. A surrogate shall communicate the surrogate's assumption of authority as promptly as practicable to the members of the patient's family specified in subsection 2 who can be readily contacted.

[PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

5. Conflict among potential surrogates; neutral 3rd party or court. If more than one member of a class assumes authority to act as surrogate and they, or members of different classes who are reasonably available, do not agree on a health care decision and the supervising health care provider is

so informed, the supervising health care provider may comply with the decision of the class having priority or a majority of the members of that class who have communicated their views to the provider. The health care provider may refer the members of the class or classes to a neutral 3rd party for assistance in resolving the dispute or to a court of competent jurisdiction. If the class is evenly divided concerning the health care decision and the supervising health care provider is so informed, that class and all individuals having lower priority are disqualified from making the decision.

[PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

6. Decision in accordance with instructions, wishes, best interest. A surrogate shall make a health care decision in accordance with the patient's individual instructions, if any, and other wishes to the extent known to the surrogate. Otherwise, the surrogate shall make the decision in accordance with the surrogate's determination of the patient's best interest and in good faith. In determining the patient's best interest, the surrogate shall consider the patient's personal values to the extent known to the surrogate. A consent is not valid if it conflicts with the intention of the patient previously expressed to the surrogate.

[PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

7. Effective without judicial approval. A health care decision made by a surrogate for a patient lacking capacity is effective without judicial approval.

[PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

8. Disqualification. An individual with capacity at any time may disqualify another, including a member of the individual's family, from acting as the individual's surrogate by a signed writing or by personally informing the supervising health care provider of the disqualification.

[PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

9. Conflict of interest. A surrogate may not be an owner, operator or employee of a residential long-term health care institution at which the patient is receiving care unless the surrogate is one of the following:

A. The spouse of the patient; [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

B. An adult child of the patient; [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

C. A parent of the patient; or [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

D. A relative of the patient with whom the patient has resided for more than 6 months prior to the decision. [PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

[PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

10. Written declaration supporting authority. A supervising health care provider may require an individual claiming the right to act as surrogate for a patient to provide a written declaration under penalty of perjury stating facts and circumstances reasonably sufficient to establish the claimed authority.

[PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. A, §2 (NEW). PL 2017, c. 402, Pt. F, §1 (AFF). PL 2019, c. 417, Pt. B, §14 (AFF).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the First Special Session of the 132nd Maine Legislature and is current through October 1, 2025. The text

is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.
--