



Physician Order Scope Of Treatment

Advance Directives

End of life decisions are never easily made, especially those concerning health care. A new provision passed by the Indiana Legislature that took effect on July 1, 2013 will allow patients entering a health care facility in Indiana to be asked whether they would like to complete a Physician Order Scope of Treatment, or POST, to direct how life-sustaining treatment will be handled should they be unable to instruct the doctors and staff themselves.

What Is POST?

A Physician Order Scope of Treatment is not the same thing as an advance directive such as a living will, which provides instructions for future treatment and may appoint a person (a health care power of attorney) to make decisions regarding your medical care for you should your medical condition render you unable to do so. Barbara J. Baird, an Indiana attorney experienced in advance directives, can assist you in preparing the necessary documents to ensure that your wishes will be honored.

A POST is completed with the assistance of a primary care physician, and is designed for patients who are terminal or suffer from advanced chronic conditions. Once created, a POST will transfer with the patient through the health care system, including doctors, hospitals, and rehabilitation centers. If

necessary, a patient can modify the document later, with the help of his physician.

How Post Differs From A Living Will

Although some may think POST is a substitute for a living will, if you are obtaining medical treatment in Indiana for a terminal or chronic condition, you should potentially have both documents to retain maximum control over your end-of-life healthcare.

While a POST is a doctor's order to your medical treatment team regarding what to do or not do in certain situations, particularly in the case of an emergency, no person is appointed to speak for you in the event that you are unable to speak for yourself. In comparison, a health care power of attorney appoints another person to make decisions regarding what medical actions should and should not be taken for your care based upon specific provisions you have made in your living will. This can be especially helpful when family members or friends are unable to agree on your treatment, so that your appointed health care representative along with your doctor are able to rely on your living will to direct the medical care that you want or don't want.

Contact Elder Law Attorney Barbara J. Baird today: 317-426-9334.