

Wishes.

Regardless of how you feel about Terri Schiavo's situation, she and the other women responsible for this area of the law had put nothing in writing to express their wishes. Everyone needs their health-care wishes in writing, including you, your parents, your children.

It's been thirty years since Karen Ann Quinlan went to the hospital in a coma. It took a full year for the New Jersey courts to figure out what to do. The "Living Will" document was a result.

And in 1983, Nancy Cruzan was found on the side of a road following a car accident. She was permanently unconscious and without any higher brain function.

It took seven years -- and the U.S. Supreme Court -- to open the door so an incompetent person's wishes could control the withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.

Those wishes on the withdrawal of life-support have to be somewhere, and are best on paper. And we recommend the **Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare**.

Why not a living will? It only covers three situations: if you're in a coma, if you're in a persistent vegetative state, or if you're close to death. The Living Will doesn't cover whether or not to operate, or start dialysis, or a million other medical things. The Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare covers all of them.

Living Wills also do not always name specific people to act for you. The Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare does let you name a specific person, plus back-up people. You'll know who's to act for you.

"I downloaded one." Healthcare documents are state-specific; no "one-size-fits-all." And if you need information about how to cover your parent who lives elsewhere, we'll guide you to who can help.

Do you know where your children's are? Karen Ann Quinlan was 21 when her legal odyssey started, and Nancy Cruzan was 25 when she had her accident. So healthcare documents are not just for old people.

"I have one already." We've updated and enhanced the core Georgia Healthcare document. HIPAA was one reason -- that new medical information privacy rule. We want the agent you've chosen to be able to get information -- not red tape -- about your condition. We've also added text because of troublesome decisions involving medical care for Alzheimer's victims.

For all of the above reasons . . . we recommend an appointment to determine what documents work for you and the members of your family.

Asset protection

Estate planning

Disability planning

Post-death strategies

Business structuring

Transactions, contracts,
& other documents.

Charitable entities

What's on the left is not legal advice. But have a question? 404 256 0020 or Fox@GaLaw.com.

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