

5664

2009-2010 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

February 17, 2009

Introduced by M. of A. HYER-SPENCER -- Multi-Sponsored by -- M. of A.
SCARBOROUGH -- read once and referred to the Committee on Health

AN ACT to amend the public health law, in relation to requirements for
health care proxies and death certificates

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEM-
BLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. The subdivision heading and paragraph (a) of subdivision 2
2 of section 2981 of the public health law, as added by chapter 752 of the
3 laws of 1990, is amended to read as follows:
4 Health care proxy; execution[; witnesses]. (a) A competent adult may
5 appoint a health care agent by a health care proxy, signed and dated by
6 the adult [in the presence of two adult witnesses who shall also sign
7 the proxy] AND SWORN TO BEFORE A NOTARY PUBLIC. Another person may sign
8 and date the health care proxy for the adult if the adult is unable to
9 do so, at the adult's direction and in the adult's presence, and in the
10 presence of [two adult witnesses who shall sign the proxy. The witnesses
11 shall state that the principal appeared to execute the proxy willingly
12 and free from duress. The person appointed as agent shall not act as
13 witness to execution of the health care proxy] A NOTARY PUBLIC AND SWORN
14 TO BEFORE THE NOTARY PUBLIC.
15 S 2. Subdivision 2 of section 2982 of the public health law, as
16 amended by chapter 230 of the laws of 2004, is amended to read as
17 follows:
18 2. Decision-making standard. After consultation with a licensed physi-
19 cian, registered nurse, licensed psychologist, licensed master social
20 worker, or a licensed clinical social worker, the agent shall make
21 health care decisions: (a) in accordance with the principal's wishes,
22 including the principal's religious and moral beliefs; or (b) if the
23 principal's wishes are not reasonably known and cannot with reasonable
24 diligence be ascertained, in accordance with the principal's best inter-
25 ests; provided, however, that if the principal's wishes regarding the

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

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1 administration of artificial nutrition and hydration are not reasonably
2 known and cannot with reasonable diligence be ascertained, the agent
3 shall not have the authority to make decisions regarding these measures;
4 PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THE AGENT MAY NOT MAKE HEALTH CARE DECISIONS WHICH
5 WILL EVENTUALLY END THE LIFE OF A PERSON WITHOUT RECEIVING WRITTEN OPIN-
6 ION FROM TWO MEDICAL DOCTORS, WHO ARE NOT THE PERSON'S ATTENDING PHYSI-
7 CIAN, STATING THAT THEY AGREE WITH THE HEALTH CARE DECISION.

8 S 3. Subdivision 4 of section 4141 of the public health law is amended
9 by adding a new paragraph (e) to read as follows:

10 (E) WHERE A DEATH IS THE RESULT OF THE HEALTH CARE DECISION OF A
11 HEALTH CARE AGENT WHICH CAUSED THE WITHDRAWAL OF NUTRITION OR HYDRATION,
12 IT SHALL BE STATED ON THE DEATH CERTIFICATE.

13 S 4. This act shall take effect immediately.