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I N   A S S E M B L Y

August 20, 2014

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Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Cusick) --  
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 ASSEMBLY, 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, are 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  
26    administration of artificial nutrition and hydration are not reasonably  
27    known and cannot with reasonable diligence be ascertained, the agent  
28    shall not have the authority to make decisions regarding these measures;

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

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1 PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THE AGENT MAY NOT MAKE HEALTH CARE DECISIONS WHICH  
2 WILL EVENTUALLY END THE LIFE OF A PERSON WITHOUT RECEIVING WRITTEN OPIN-  
3 ION FROM TWO MEDICAL DOCTORS, WHO ARE NOT THE PERSON'S ATTENDING PHYSI-  
4 CIAN, STATING THAT THEY AGREE WITH THE HEALTH CARE DECISION.  
5 S 3. Subdivision 4 of section 4141 of the public health law is amended  
6 by adding a new paragraph (e) to read as follows:  
7 (E) WHERE A DEATH IS THE RESULT OF THE HEALTH CARE DECISION OF A  
8 HEALTH CARE AGENT WHICH CAUSED THE WITHDRAWAL OF NUTRITION OR HYDRATION,  
9 IT SHALL BE STATED ON THE DEATH CERTIFICATE.  
10 S 4. This act shall take effect immediately.