

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE ESTATE PLAN

WILL OR TRUST -- This document outline how and to whom you want your property distributed at your death. It also states who will settle your estate. Living trusts have provision that take effect immediately upon signing and other provisions that take place after your death.

PERSONAL PROPERTY MEMORANDUM -- Allows you to leave specific items to a person, such as jewelry, books, etc.

FINANCIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY -- Document that has a legal effect while you are still living. This document allows you to name an individual who can make financial decisions for you. A successor should also be named in case the first person is unable to serve.

HEALTHCARE POWER OF ATTORNEY -- Like the financial power of attorney this document has a legal effect while you are still living. This document allows you to name certain individuals to make medical decisions for you when you are unable to make them.

LIVING WILL -- Another document that has a legal effect only while you are living. This document specifies how you want to be treated at the end of life.

HIPAA RELEASE -- A document that gives health care providers permission to share your medical information with family and/or friends that you specifically name.

FUNERAL PLANNING DOCUMENT -- A document that allows you to name the person or people you want to plan your funeral. It specifies whether you will be buried or cremated and make other decisions about how your body will be treated after your death.

IF YOU HAVE UNDERAGE CHILDREN:

AUTHORIZATION FOR CARE OF MINOR CHILDREN -- This is a power-of-attorney document that allows you to appoint an agent to temporarily care for your minor children and make decisions on behalf of your minor children when you are on vacation or incapacitated. This is typically for short term situations.

GUARDIANSHIP APPOINTMENT -- This document allows you to appoint a guardian to care for your children if you are unable to care for them.