

## I Just Turned 18; What's Changed?



When you turn 18, you are an adult. That means you are legally able to make your own choices about things such as health, school, and money. We all need help sometimes making choices and we all need to think about our future. What would happen if you were not able to make an important choice because you were too sick or the choice is just too hard to understand?

### An Advance Directive can help.

An Advance Directive helps you prepare for a future time when you may not be able to make choices or tell people about your wishes for health care. In an Advance Directive, you can:

- choose a person to make decisions for you if your doctor says that you cannot make a decision.
- tell your loved ones and doctors what kinds of treatments are right for you.
- tell others what you think about difficult choices including organ donation and how you would want to be treated if you become so sick you may not get better.



Many people find that naming someone to make decisions for them is all they need. When thinking about who to choose, here are some things you should keep in mind:

- Pick someone you really trust because he or she may have to make important decisions in your future.
- Talk to this person to make sure he or she is willing to do the job.
- Make sure he or she knows what kinds of treatment you would want and what types of treatments you wouldn't want.
- You can choose a second person to help you if the first person you chose can't do the job or can't be reached when needed.

## How Do I Do It?

Here are some ways you can make an Advance Directive:

- You can write it yourself using sample forms. You can find some sample forms at the following website:  
<http://www.virginiaadvancedirectives.org/picking-an-ad-form.html>
- You can talk to your doctor or a therapist.
- You can hire a lawyer to write it for you.
- You can call us at the disAbility Law Center. dLCV advocates are available to answer your questions every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:30 until 4:00. Our toll-free number is:

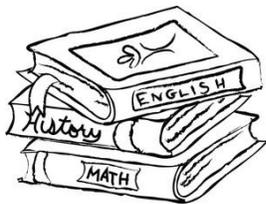


800-552-3962

Once your Advance Directive is written, you need to sign it in front of two witnesses. Virginia does not require it to be notarized, but it is a good idea to do so if possible. Once you have the necessary signatures, you should give copies to the Agent, doctors, and other trusted family members. Make sure to keep a list of who has copies of your Advance Directive. If you make changes to it later, you will want everyone to have the newest version.

You can also register your Advance Directive online at: [www.virginiaregistry.org](http://www.virginiaregistry.org)  
If you have any questions about registering your Advance Directive, you can call the registry's Help Line at 800-224-0791.

## What If I Need Help with Other Tough Decisions?



If you need help making decisions about school, you can choose someone to help you with those decisions. For more information see: [www.doe.virginia.gov/special\\_ed/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/index.shtml)



If you get checks from Social Security, you can ask Social Security for a Representative Payee to receive the checks for you and help you pay your bills and budget your money behalf. Check out the following website for more information: [www.ssa.gov/payee/](http://www.ssa.gov/payee/)