Transitioning to Adulthood: Teen's Guide to Decision Making When Moving from Child to Adult Health Care

At age 18, you become a legal adult and will make your own health care decisions. Your care team will talk directly with you unless you give permission for them to talk with someone else. This handout explains how to prepare for this change.

Turning 18 does not mean you are on your own. It means you get to decide who helps you and how. Talk with your health care team. They can help you review options and choose the right level of support as you move into adult care.

Patient Privacy
Your health information is private, and no one can see your medical record without your permission. If you want someone else to be able to communicate with your care team or make decisions on your behalf, you will need to grant formal consent for that. There are a few consent forms that are often used. Before signing any of these consent forms, you must agree and understand what the form does. You can change or remove access at any time.

Authorization for Verbal Communication
This form allows your care team to talk with a parent or another adult about your health. You can complete a separate form for each person you want involved.

Scan the QR code or visit the link for more information: www.uwhealth.org/medical-records



MyChart Proxy Access
This allows someone you trust to see your MyChart account and send messages to your care team. To set it up, log into UW Health MyChart, search "request proxy access," select "other accounts," request access, and follow the steps.

Scan the QR code or visit the link for more information: www.uwhealth.org/mychart



Power of Attorney for Health Care (POA-HC)
This legal form lets you choose someone to make health care decisions for you if you cannot make them yourself. Every adult should have one. It is free, takes about 10 minutes to complete, and does not need a lawyer. You can change it at any time. Many people, including those who need help with complex decisions, can complete this form.

Completing a POA-HC does not take away your right to make your own decisions. You stay in charge unless two health care providers decide that, because of illness or impairment, you cannot make decisions for a period of time. Until then, your health care agent has no authority.

Most young adults choose the State of Wisconsin short-form POA-HC. Video guides are available.

Scan the QR code or visit the link for more information: www.uwhealth.org/acp



Disability Support Options

If you have a disability and need more help, there are options to support you.

Supported Decision-Making Agreement

This legal agreement lets you choose trusted adults to help explain and talk through decisions. You still make all final decisions. You must be at least 18 and able to choose someone you trust using speech, writing, or communication aids. If able, you should also complete a POA-HC in case you aren't able to make decisions later.

Scan the QR code or visit the link for more information: wi-bpdd.org/index.php/supporteddecision-making

Guardianship

This is a court process where a judge names a guardian to make certain health care or financial decisions if you cannot make them yourself. Guardianship removes many legal rights, so it is only used when other options do not work.

Talk with your health care team if you and your family are considering this option.

Scan the QR code or visit the links for more information: https://gwaar.org/guardianship-resources

Decision-Making Checklist

6 to 12 Months Before Age 18:

- ☐ Talk with parents or trusted adults about health care, school, work, and money goals.
- ☐ Ask your clinic about an Authorization for Verbal Communication form.
- ☐ If able, complete a POA-HC after you turn 18.
- ☐ Request MyChart Proxy Access after you turn 18, if wanted.
- ☐ If needed, talk with your care team about other options, such as guardianship.
- ☐ Keep all forms in one place and share copies with your care team.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 4/2026. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF# 8500