



# HEARTLAND HEALTH REGION

*Healthy People, Health Communities, and Service Excellence in an Enduring Health System*

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**HealthLine**  
**1-877-800-0002**  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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For Immediate Release

### **WHAT IS A HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE?**

A Health Care Directive, sometimes called a 'Living Will', tells others how you would like to be treated if you lose your ability to make decisions about your health care. Your Health Care Directive contains instructions about your choices of medical treatment. You prepare the directive in advance, looking ahead to a time when you may no longer be able to make health care decisions for yourself.

In Saskatchewan, you must be at least 16 years of age and capable of making health care decisions. Health Care Directives are sanctioned by provincial legislation in Saskatchewan. The law is called the **Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Act (1997)**.

Your Health Care Directive gives you the chance to tell health care providers what type of care you believe will be most appropriate for you if you should develop a life threatening condition and you are not able to express your wishes.

A person you name to make health care decisions on your behalf when you are not able is called a Substitute Health Care Decision Maker or a Proxy. You may name one or more persons as Substitute Health Care Decision Makers or Proxy. It is also important that your family, Substitute Health Care decision maker (proxy) and physician are aware of your wishes and have a copy of the most up to date Directive.

The decision whether or not to make a Health Care Directive is up to you. If you become ill and incapable of making health care decisions and have not prepared a Directive, another person may still make decisions for you. If you have appointed a proxy, they will have the authority to make decisions based on their understanding of what you would have wanted for your care. If you **DO NOT** appoint a proxy the decision maker will be your nearest family member, beginning with your spouse, eldest child, etc.

For more information on Health Care Directives, contact your family physician, or the Client Care Coordinator in your local Home Care office.

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Media:

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