

Powers of Attorney

A power of attorney is a legal document where one person (the principal) authorizes another person (the agent) to act on the principal's behalf. Financial powers of attorney allow your agent to make decisions regarding your property. Health care powers of attorney allow your agent to make decisions regarding your health care needs.

Your power of attorney can be broad in scope, giving your agent the ability to make any and all financial and health care decisions for you, or can be limited by specifying the types of decisions you would like your agent to make on your behalf.

You can also choose whether you would like your agent to have the ability to make decisions both now and if you become incapacitated (a durable power of attorney), or your agent can be limited to making decisions only when you become incapacitated (a springing power of attorney). It is important to have these documents, regardless of age, as these powers may be necessary due to an accident or an unexpected health crisis.

If you become incapacitated and do not have powers of attorney, your family and/or friends are then forced to petition the courts for guardianship to make financial and health care decisions for you. This can be an expensive and time consuming process. The court may appoint someone to make decisions for you that you would not necessarily have chosen yourself.

If you would like a FREE initial consultation with someone who has helped other Pennsylvania families deal with these types of issues, call Steinbacher, Sholder & Stahl at 570-322-2077.