



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, Governor

Department of Human Services
Children, Adults and Families
Foster Care Program
500 Summer Street NE, E-77
Salem, OR 97301-1066
503-945-5600
Fax 503-373-7032
TTY 503-945-5896

Re: Choosing a Health Care Representative

This may be a sensitive subject, but it involves you and your future. As of October 1, 2010, DHS Child Welfare has a new Federal requirement to inform youth of their right to select a health care representative. Youth are to be informed just prior to their 18th birthday. A health care representative is someone who can make medical care decisions on your behalf should you become unable to make your own medical care decisions. We realize that you are young and it is difficult to think about future medical issues and how you would want doctors to handle your medical treatment (at any age).

However, it is important to consider and include this information as you develop your transition plan and move towards adulthood. It is vital that you make your medical care/treatment wishes known to people and determine if you need or want to select a health care representative. If you choose to have a health care representative, that person would "step in" and let the doctors know how YOU want your medical treatment or care to go. This will only happen when or if you are unable able to make health care decisions for yourself (if you are unconscious, or otherwise unable to talk, write, or communicate with the doctors). If you do not appoint (select) a health care representative, the law allows for other people to make health care decisions on your behalf.

DHS is notifying all foster youth (17 ½ years old & older), caseworkers, and foster parents of this new requirement. **Enclosed is a detailed brochure from Oregon Health Decisions explaining Oregon's Advance Directive.** The brochure has a **toll free number** to call if you have any questions or would like more information.

I apologize for notifying you by letter. A letter was the only way to inform more than 700 young people of this option by October 1st. We are working to develop a training DVD presented by youth for youth. We will also be providing your caseworker with training materials so he or she can help you discuss this decision. We hope to have the DVDs available in the near future.

We know this can be an unpleasant subject to think about, but we want **YOU** to have the **power to decide** what happens to you, even if you are unable to speak for yourself. Please contact your caseworker if you have questions or would like assistance completing the Oregon Advance Directive.

Sincerely,

Kevin George
Foster Care Program Manager

Enclosure: Oregon Advance Directive brochure