VERMONT
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Vermont Advance Directive Registry

Policies and Procedures

Definitions:

"Advance Directive" is a legal document that conveys a person's wishes regarding their health care treatment and end of life choices should they become incapacitated or otherwise unable to make those decisions. The document may include an appointment of an agent, identification of a preferred primary care physician, healthcare wishes, anatomical gifts, disposition of remains, terminal care document, or similar documents.

"Authorized Providers" of the Registry are individuals or organizations that have applied and been approved by the Department of Health for unlimited secure access to the online Registry.

"Provider" includes health care providers, health care facilities, residential care facilities, probate court officials, procurement organizations, funeral directors, crematory operators, and cemetery officials.

"Registrant" is an individual who has submitted his/her advance directive or Advance Directive Locator to the Registry, and received written confirmation that the advance directive is registered.

"Vermont Advance Directive Registry" ("Registry") is a secure, web-based database to which individuals may submit, at no charge, an advance directive or an Advance Directive Locator (information regarding the location of an advance directive), and other documents which amend, suspend, or revoke an advance directive. The documents are electronically stored and may be accessed by providers through the Internet or by telephone.

1. Registering Advance Directives

a) To register an advance directive, a prospective registrant must complete the *Registration Agreement* form and mail or FAX it along with a copy of their advance directive to:

Vermont Advance Directive Registry
523 Westfield Ave.
PO Box 2789
Westfield, NJ 07091-2789
(FAX) 908-654-1919

b) Registrants who do not wish to share their document online because of privacy concerns may send a description of the physical location of copies of their advance directives using the *Advance Directive Locator* form. The *Locator* form is stored in the Registry in place of the advance directive. The *Locator* form maximizes privacy but may delay important health care decisions until the advance directive is located.

c) The Registry will electronically scan the advance directive or *Locator* form, and post it in a secure web-accessible database along with identifying information from the *Registration*

Agreement. The paper copy of the advance directive is temporarily stored until the electronic form of the document has been saved and backed up in the Registry's computer.

d) The Registry serves only as a repository of information and documents, and will not evaluate the validity of, or reconcile, documents except to determine whether the *Registration Agreement* is complete.
e) The Registry will send a confirmation letter to the registrant along with a registration ID number, instructions for accessing their documents at the Registry website, a wallet card, and stickers to affix to a driver's license or insurance card. Registrants are instructed to share the registration ID number from the wallet card with anyone who should have access to their advance directives (e.g., agent, family members, or physician). With this number, anyone may access a person's advance directive stored in the Registry.
f) The Registry shall contact all registrants annually by mail to confirm that their personal information and advance directives are current and accurate.
g) The Registry and providers shall not charge registrants a fee to register or to change their advance directives.
h) Registrations remain in effect until the registrant dies or terminates the registration.

2. Changing Advance Directives

a) To make changes to advance directives (i.e., suspend, revoke, replace, edit, or delete) or to update contact information, registrants must mail or FAX to the Registry a completed *Authorization to Change* form, or sufficient information to identify the registrant (i.e., registrant's ID number) and a clear statement describing the change.

- If the registrant wishes to replace their advance directive with an entirely new document, the Registry will replace the current document with a scanned version of the new document, along with the *Authorization to Change* form or statement describing the change.
- If the registrant wishes to add documents that amend, suspend, or revoke the current advance directive, the Registry will append the additional documents to the registrant's advance directive file along with the *Authorization to Change* form or statement describing the change. The documents will appear in chronological order with the most recent at the beginning of the scanned document file.
- If the registrant wishes to delete the entire advance directive and terminate the registration, the Registry will delete the registrant's record.

b) The Registry will notify the registrant by mail when the changes have been processed.
c) The Registry will enter date of the most recent confirmation or change received from the registrant on the coversheet transmitted to the provider when an advance directive is retrieved.

3. Notifications of Change

a) Providers, agents and guardians who become aware of an amendment, suspension, or revocation of a registrant's advance directive have obligations pertaining to notifying the Registry. Notifications are done by completing and sending a Provider Notification form or Agent/Guardian Notification form to the Registry.
b) When a notification form is received by the Registry, the Registry will scan the form and append it to the registrant's file, placing it before previously submitted documents.
c) If the Registry receives a notification of change from a provider, agent or guardian, but has not received from the registrant an Authorization to Change form or statement describing the change, the Registry will contact the registrant to confirm the change referenced in the notification.

4. Accessing the Registry

a) Registrants may view, download and print their advance directive and personal registration information by logging into the Registry website (http://healthvermont.gov/vadr) using the registration ID number issued by the Registry. The registration ID is included in the confirmation package mailed to registrants to complete and confirm the registration process.

b) With a registrant's ID number, any person may log into the Registry website and access the registrant's documents.

c) An agent, guardian, or person appointed to arrange for the disposition remains who does not have a registrant's ID number may obtain a copy of the advance directive for a specific registrant by calling the Registry's toll-free number (1-800-548-9455).

d) Providers may access documents in the Registry in several ways:

(i) Log into the Registry using the registrant's ID number.

(ii) Call the Registry's toll-free number (1-800-548-9455) to request a copy of a registrant's document.

- The Registry will take steps to verify that the request is from a legitimate provider including: calling the facility's main number, confirming that the person making the request is a valid employee of the facility, asking for the employee that called, and confirming the registrant's information.
- Once the request is verified, the Registry will search the database for the registrant, and if found, will FAX the advance directive documents to a secure FAX machine at the facility.
- For phone requests occurring outside of regular business hours (Monday - Friday, 9 am - 5 pm EST), providers must leave a voice message guided by automated prompts. Voice messages are checked regularly, and emergency requests are usually fulfilled within 30-60 minutes.
- The Registry will maintain a log of all provider requests.

(iii) Obtain an access account by becoming an authorized provider.

- Providers may apply for an access account by submitting a completed *Provider Access Application* and *Provider Access Agreement* to the Registry c/o the Department of Health at 108 Cherry St., Burlington, VT 05401. The Department of Health will review and approve provider applications, and the Registry will issue the account code and instructions to access and use the Registry.
- Authorized providers will be issued an Organization ID Number and an Access Code. All employees that will be using the registry should have access to these numbers. Access codes serve as a security mechanism to authenticate and to track access by providers.
- For facilities that maintain a computer network and issue internal user accounts (e.g., large hospitals), access to the Registry is controlled through the facility's network. Normally, an employee who is permitted access to the registry would log into the hospital's internal system, and then activate an icon on their screen that would bring them to the Registry. The Registry can track access to documents back to the user account of the person who accessed the document.
- At smaller organizations that do not have their own computer network, employees that are permitted access to the Registry will be assigned a Username and Password by the local Registry "administrator" at the facility. These employees use their Organization's ID Number/Access Code and their individual username and password to log into the Registry. The Registry can track access to documents back to the assigned username of the person who accessed the document.

- Providers who are issued a registry account shall agree to protect their Organization ID Number and Access Code, and to limit their use to only employees who need to view and download Registry documents.
- Providers who are issued a registry account shall train their employees on the proper use of the Registry and registrants' documents, and on the obligation to report any unauthorized access or misuse of information to the Department of Health.
- Authorized providers have unlimited, 24/7 Internet access to the Registry at: http://healthvermont.gov/vadr/.
- Providers may search the Registry database for a specific person's advance directive by registration ID number, or by name and date of birth. If the person is found, the advance directive documents may be viewed or printed.

(iv) Access the Registry through an affiliated hospital.

- All hospitals in Vermont will have access accounts into the Registry. Providers who are affiliated with a hospital and can log into the hospital's computer network may be able to access the Registry through the hospital's computer system.

e) The Registry will maintain records to track each time a registrant's file is accessed. The records will include the name of the registrant, date accessed, and the Organization ID number and User account/username of the person who accessed the file.

5. Customer Support

a) EMERGENCY support during non-business hours support is available by calling 888-548-9455.

b) Routine help and questions are addressed by sending an e-mail message to the registry address: support@uslivingwillregistry.com.

c) Business hours telephone support (Monday - Friday, 9 am - 5 pm EST) is available by calling 908-654-1441.

d) Non-business hours technical problems with the Registry can be addresses by calling 1-800-548-9455 and following the voice prompts to speak with representatives of the Registry.

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