

## How Will My Proxy Know What I Want?

It's important to **plan a conversation** with your Health Care Proxy. Imagine that you're seriously injured or ill and your Proxy is called. Would he/she know what you'd want? Help make sure you're both ready. Set aside a time and place to have a conversation with your Proxy and perhaps other people close to you. Think about the following as you plan your conversation. For more tips, see the Conversation Starter Kit at [www.bidmc.org/conversationready](http://www.bidmc.org/conversationready).

### Who? .....

When you have your conversation with your Proxy, who else should be there? These people might be called upon to help the Proxy make tough decisions. Some possibilities are:

- |                                   |   |  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parents  | <input type="checkbox"/> Partner/spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual/religious advisor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends  | <input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver      | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctor         |  |

### When? .....

Pick a date and time when you can have a relaxed conversation. (Remember, it often feels like it's "too early" to talk about this, until suddenly it's "too late.") You might want to think about having the conversation:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Before your next doctor's appointment   | <input type="checkbox"/> Before the baby arrives                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Before a child moves away from home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> At a family dinner or holiday gathering | <input type="checkbox"/> Before you get sick (or get sick again) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                         |

When will you have your conversation?

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### Where? .....

Pick a location where you won't be interrupted and that's comfortable for everyone. Some ideas are:

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At the kitchen table | <input type="checkbox"/> Sitting outside | <input type="checkbox"/> At a spiritual/religious place |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On a walk or hike    | <input type="checkbox"/> On a long drive | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                          |

### How? .....

Try starting the conversation with something like: "I'd like you to be my Health Care Proxy. If I get injured or seriously ill someday, you could be called on to speak for me. I want you to know what matters to me so that you can be my voice without having to guess or worry about what to do."

### What? .....

Here are some things to think and talk about:

- When you think of being seriously ill or injured, or being in the last phase of your life, what's most important to you? How long you live or the quality of your life?
- Are there any particular milestones or events that you'd like to be around for, if possible?
- Are there certain types of treatment you would or would not want? Why or why not? Do you have specific concerns?
- Are there certain religious or ethical views that should be considered in planning your care?
- Where would you want—or not want—to receive care (for instance, in a hospital, at home, in a nursing facility)?
- Are there people you'd want your Proxy to contact—or not contact—to help him/her make decisions?
- What are your thoughts about organ donation?
- When would it be okay to shift from trying to cure a disease to focusing mostly on comfort?
- Are there circumstances that would make life feel unbearable to you?
- Are there situations in which you would want to limit life-sustaining treatment?