
MAKING DECISIONS AFTER AGE 18

PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

When your child turns 18, they are legally an adult. This shift happens regardless of whether your child can functionally participate in their health care. The provider will begin talking to your child, not the parents, about their health. The law that requires this is called HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accessibility Act).

Helpful Tips:

- If your child wants to share their health information with you or others, the provider will need your child to fill out a form that grants you access to their medical record.
- If your child needs help making choices as an adult, discuss with your family, providers, or others you trust about who needs to be involved and how to best include them in your child's health care.
- There are many choices for young adults who need help making decisions:
 - **Health Care Power of Attorney** lets a young adult choose an attorney to be their representative, or agent, in the event that they are not able to make or communicate decisions about all aspects of their health care.
 - **Supported decision-making** allows the young adult to create a team that they trust to help them understand their choices and make their own decisions.
 - **Guardianship and conservatorship** may take away all of someone's decision-making rights and can be ended only by a court order. There may be other choices that are cheaper and less restrictive but exploring all of the options will help your family make the best decision for your young adult.