

Mental Health Advance Directives



A Mental Health Advance Directive (MHAD) is a document that allows you to make your choices known regarding your mental health treatment in the event that a mental health crisis interferes with your ability to understand your condition, available treatments along with risks and benefits, and what may happen if treatment is not received. In effect, you are making decisions about treatment before the time you will need it.

In a MHAD you can communicate preferences such as hospitals, medications, types of treatment, dietary and religious choices, who can be contacted during your crisis, and who you elect to take care of your personal affairs if hospitalized. You will also identify the individuals (e.g. agent, guardian, mental health power of attorney) who you approve to make mental health treatment decisions on your behalf during the time you cannot make decisions for yourself.

Requirements for creating and following MHAD are guided by Pennsylvania state law (Act 194 of 2004). A MHAD does not need to be created in a certain form, however, it must contain certain elements to be considered valid.

Information can be obtained by contacting:

Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers' Association
pmhca.org
717-221-1022

Pennsylvania Protection & Advocacy/ Disability Law Project
1-800-692-7443
717-236-8110
1-877-375-7139

Mental Health Association in Pennsylvania
1-866-578-3659
717-346-0549
mhapa.org