

### **What is a Patient Spokesperson?**

A Patient Spokesperson is an adult family member or friend who a patient grants authority to have access to the patient's Protected Health Information (PHI). For example, a patient may want their spouse or adult child to assist in billing questions, to book appointments on their behalf or to be appraised of their health status. Designating a Patient Spokesperson assures that we have a record of the patient's wishes in this regard and are able to share information in accordance with that request.

### **Is there a form that needs to be completed and signed?**

The Designation of Patient Spokesperson form must be completed and signed by the patient. Note that it is important that all appropriate and applicable blanks be filled.

### **Where can I locate a Designation of Patient Spokesperson form?**

The Designation of Patient Spokesperson form can be found at:  
<https://hipaa.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/5031-FR-designation-of-patient-spokesperson.pdf>  
or you may contact the HIPAA Privacy Office at 203-432-5919.

### **Does a Patient Spokesperson have access to all of the named patient's medical records?**

The Patient Spokesperson form allows the patient to specify if access to all the records is being granted or if the patient wants to limit access to a specific health care incident(s).

### **Does completing and signing the Designation of Patient Spokesperson form give the Spokesperson authority for all the named patient's health care decisions?**

Completing and signing the Designation of Patient Spokesperson form does not give the Spokesperson authority to make health care decisions for the patient. It only allows the Spokesperson to have access to the patient's protected health information (PHI).

### **Who can act on behalf of a patient to make health care decisions?**

A Personal Representative who has been granted legal authority to act on behalf of an incompetent adult patient or a minor patient can make health care decisions regarding the patient's health care and can also assist in exercising the patient's rights related to protected health information.

### **What is the difference between a "Personal Representative" and a "Patient Spokesperson"?**

A Personal Representative is defined under state law and has authority to act as the patient. Personal Representatives can sign forms on behalf of the patient and authorize treatment. A Patient Spokesperson is often a family member or friend who is providing support to the patient or assisting in their care but cannot act on behalf of the patient. The Patient Spokesperson often will be present during discussions of treatment plans and may use that information to assist the patient with their care at home or with providing emotional support.

**Where can I find a list of the various types of Personal Representatives and their specific authority?**

Refer to: <http://hipaa.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/5038-PR.pdf> for a list of definitions and authority granted to each of the various Personal representatives regulated by HIPAA and Connecticut State law.