



## STATE BAR OF WISCONSIN

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### **Your Tax Returns Are Ready, But Is the Rest of Your Life in Order?**

#### ***Mark Healthcare Decisions Day by Starting Important Dialogue with Your Family***

**Madison, WI** – With taxes due next week, chances are you have been compiling your receipts, examining your income, and taking stock of the past year. But looking forward and planning ahead for the end of your life can be just as critical to you and your family's financial and emotional well-being. That's why the State Bar is marking National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD) by offering free electronic consumer guides for the next two weeks.

Free copies of [A Gift to Your Family: Planning Ahead for Future Health Needs](#) can be downloaded to help you jumpstart important personal conversations surrounding end-of-life decisions. The guide offers practical insights on a range of issues such as power of attorney for health care, living wills, and organ and tissue donation. The guide also includes state forms to help you put your wishes in writing.

"Just as with taxes, avoiding end-of-life issues will not make them go away. It's important to make these decisions now in consultation with your family and your legal counsel," said Elder Law Section Board Member Ben Adams. "If you want your wishes to be met at the end of your life, now is the time to consider future medical care and organ donation."

Under Wisconsin law, competent adults have the right to accept or refuse medical treatment, and the right to be an organ and tissue donor. An estimated 80 percent of Wisconsin residents, including 50 percent of those with severe or terminal illnesses, have not completed an advance directive documenting their preferences about issues surrounding end-of-life decisions. April 16 is the fifth National Healthcare Decisions Day. Governor Walker has also officially [proclaimed](#) April 16 as Healthcare Decisions Day in Wisconsin.

The 28-page guide, now in its sixth printing, started production in 2000 through a partnership with the Wisconsin Hospital Association, the Wisconsin Medical Society, and Gunderson Lutheran Medical Center. In 2006, the State Bar Communications Committee partnered with the Wisconsin Hispanic Lawyers Association to make the guide available in Spanish. Since 2000, the State Bar has distributed more than 500,000 planning guides to hospitals, clinics, lawyers, and the public.

Free copies can be accessed below from April 9 to April 23:

[Download English-Language Guidebook](#)  
[Download Spanish-Language Guidebook](#)

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*The State Bar of Wisconsin is the mandatory professional association, created by the Wisconsin Supreme Court, for attorneys who hold a Wisconsin law license. With more than 23,000 members, the State Bar aids the courts in improving the administration of justice, provides continuing legal education for its members to help them maintain their expertise, and assists Wisconsin lawyers in carrying out community service initiatives to educate the public about the legal system and the value of lawyers. For more information, visit [www.wisbar.org](http://www.wisbar.org).*