

# Not Just a Signature – A Commitment: Navigating Personal Care Decisions

Life can change in an instant. One moment you're living your day-to-day routine, and the next, you're called upon to act as an Attorney for Personal Care for a loved one. Whether you accepted the role years ago or were surprised to learn you've been appointed, the responsibility is significant—and often misunderstood.

Many assume this role is limited to end-of-life decisions, but it's far more encompassing. It involves making choices about healthcare, nutrition, shelter, clothing, hygiene, and safety—essentially, everything that affects a person's well-being and quality of life, excluding financial matters.

## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE

An Attorney for Personal Care is a fiduciary, meaning they must act in the best interests of the person who appointed them (the grantor), not their own. This includes:

1. Acting diligently and in good faith
2. Encouraging the grantor's participation in decisions, where possible
3. Fostering regular contact with supportive family and friends
4. Promoting independence and choosing the least intrusive options
5. Keeping detailed records of decisions made
6. Honouring prior capable wishes, or acting in the grantor's best interests when those wishes are unknown

## QUICK TIPS FOR NEW ATTORNEYS FOR PERSONAL CARE

If you're stepping into this role for the first time, here are a few essentials to keep in mind:

1. **Talk Early** – Understand the grantor's wishes while they're still capable.
  2. **Know Your Authority** – Review the Power of Attorney document carefully.
  3. **Document Decisions** – Keep a simple log of key actions and conversations.
  4. **Build a Team** – Lean on professionals and family for support.
  5. **Stay Curious** – Learn about the grantor's health conditions and care options.
  6. **Respect Autonomy** – Involve the grantor in decisions whenever possible.
  7. **Protect Your Well-being** – Set boundaries and seek help when needed.
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## WHY THIS ROLE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

With Canada's aging population and increasing rates of dementia, the need for trusted Attorneys for Personal Care is growing. Yet, fewer people are willing or able to take on the role. It's a long-term commitment—sometimes lasting decades—and requires emotional resilience, time, and a deep sense of duty.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Being an Attorney for Personal Care is not just a legal appointment—it's a profound act of service. It demands empathy, clarity, and a willingness to advocate for someone else's dignity and well-being. If you've been appointed, take the time to understand the role, prepare for its demands, and honour the trust placed in you.



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