



Illinois State Medical Society

August 13, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Quinn
Governor, State of Illinois
207 Statehouse
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Quinn:

On behalf of the physician members of the Illinois State Medical Society (ISMS) and their patients, I am writing to urge that you sign SB 3228, which amends the *Illinois Power of Attorney Act*, into law.

ISMS has been involved in educating the public and health care professionals about advance directives and health care planning for decades. One of our most popular resources is a brochure titled "A Personal Decision," which is provided free of charge by ISMS and is used by many physicians, hospitals and other facilities to provide information to patients and assist them with advance care planning. The brochure contains copies of statutory and published advance directives such as the Living Will, Power of Attorney for Health Care, and Uniform Do-Not-Resuscitate Advance Directive forms, as well as the mandated Illinois Department of Public Health statement on advance directives.

For many years, ISMS has heard from patients and health care professionals alike that the power of attorney form is confusing and uses too much technical language. The existing form requires college-level English proficiency to understand, and the accompanying notice is written at the 10th grade level. Three years ago, ISMS started exploring a more patient-friendly power of attorney form that the citizens of Illinois will be able to understand on their own, without needing a professional to explain it to them. Through discussions with chaplains, social workers, nurses, patients, physicians and others, the ISMS, Illinois Hospital Association and the Illinois State Bar Association have brought the language in the form down to the 10th grade level, and the notice to the 8th grade level. We believe the result is a clearer form that patients will feel confident in using.

It is critical that patients be able to understand this form and its accompanying notice. It is our hope that this effort will result in clear documentation of each patient's wishes, and that every citizen of Illinois will receive the care that he or she wants.

For these reasons, ISMS recommends that you sign SB 3228 into law.

Very truly yours,

Paul H. DeHaan, M.D.
Chair, Board of Trustees

cc: William A. McDade, M.D., Ph.D.
Scott A. Cooper, M.D.
Alexander R. Lerner