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FREE ONLINE REGISTRY OF *HALACHIC* HEALTH CARE PROXY/"LIVING WILL"¹

A Communal Service Provided by the Orthodox Union Department of Community Services
Safe Homes, Safe Shuls, Safe Schools Initiative

The Orthodox Union, through agreement with the New York Legal Assistance Group ("NYLAG"), has arranged for you to register your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" FREE of charge with the **U.S. Living Will Registry**® (the "Registry"). The Registry will maintain a copy of your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/"Living Will" on a secure website that can be accessed instantly by any health care provider. We encourage registration because, in many cases, a patient has to be rushed to the hospital and the family cannot locate the *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will." The on-line Registry solves this problem and therefore ensures that your health care wishes will be respected. (If you were to register on your own with the U.S. Living Will Registry®, there would be a charge for this service.)

Online Registry for *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/"Living Will": How It Works

The Registration Agreement (available from the NYLAG web site) gives the Registry permission to send a copy of your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" to any health care provider. For these purposes, health care providers are hospitals, doctors, skilled nursing facilities, nursing facilities, home health agencies, providers of home health care, ambulatory surgery centers, and hospices. Once registered, you are registered for life. The Registry aims to keep your personal information private and confidential, just like a medical record, by agreeing not to release your information to any party other than health care providers. Your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" is electronically stored in the Registry's computer along with your emergency contact information.

The U.S. Living Will Registry® provides a wallet-sized card and labels which can be affixed to your driver's license and insurance card stating that a Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" is registered. As a registrant, you also will receive a wallet card listing you special Registry identification number.

¹ *Halachic* Health Care Proxies/ "Living Wills" are described in further detail under a separate communication that is being sent to you with this one.

The information contained in this communication is provided as a service to our members. It is designed only to give general information and is not intended to be, and shall not be regarded or construed as constituting, legal advice. The applicable statutes in each state are similar in substance, but no effort has been made ensure that the statements herein are in conformity with the laws of each jurisdiction. You should seek the assistance of an attorney licensed to practice law in the state in which you reside for specific legal advice.

The registrant is contacted annually by mail to confirm that the Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" has not been changed or revoked, and to update personal and emergency contact information. The registrant makes any changes to personal or emergency contact information, signs the letter confirming that the Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" has not been changed or revoked (or sends the Registry a new Health Care Proxy/"Living Will"), and mails the letter back to the Registry. The date of confirmation is listed on a new wallet card and is provided whenever the document is accessed. In this way, there is no doubt as to whether your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" still represents your wishes. This annual update is included in the lifetime registration; there is never a charge to the registrant for annual updates or for continued registration.

Health care providers can contact the Registry 24 hours a day to gain access to Health Care Proxies/ "Living Wills" and emergency contact information, or simply to inquire as to whether any patient has a Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will." Member health care providers can use the automated service to request documents from the Registry by telephone (1-800-LIV-WILL) or via the secure Internet web site. Member health care providers are assigned Identification numbers and access codes to use when contacting the Registry. Health care providers have the option of receiving documents from the Registry by fax or via encrypted Internet transmission. By gaining secure access to the patient's registration numbers, health care providers can retrieve a copy of a Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will," along with an emergency contact in a matter of seconds. If they don't have the registration number, they can easily search for the documents using last name and birth date, or social security number, if available.

Health care providers who are not members of the Registry can access documents via a secure internet site by entering the registration number from the wallet card. If the wallet card is not available, they can obtain the document by phone. The health care provider simply contacts the Registry by phone, 1-800-LIV-WILL, and provides information about the facility and about the person whose document they are trying to retrieve. Registry personnel will perform a manual transmission of the Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will".

Benefits of Registration:

1. The U.S. Living Will Registry® provides a wallet-sized card and labels which can be affixed to your driver's license and insurance card with your special identification number. This information allows a health care provider to view your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" at any time of the day or night on a secured encrypted internet site. This procedure can provide peace of mind to you and your loved ones: no one will have to search for these vital documents should you become incapacitated since the only information the health care provider needs is readily available in your wallet or purse.

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2. If the card and labels are not accessible, health care providers call a special number to access the *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will."
3. The U.S. Living Will Registry® issues a new wallet card every twelve months. This will allow you to remember to update any new information (change of telephone numbers, addresses, or even change of appointed Health Care Agent).

What if I Change my Mind?

It is easy to revoke your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/"Living Will," to change the person you have chosen as your Health Care Agent or to change any instructions or limitations you have included in your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/"Living Will". Simply fill out a new *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/"Living Will" and register it. In addition, you may indicate that your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/"Living Will" expires on a specified date or if certain events occur. Otherwise, the *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/"Living Will" will be valid indefinitely.

If you choose your spouse as your Health Care Agent or as an alternate and you get divorced, the appointment *should* be revoked automatically unless you have stated otherwise in your current *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" or, after your divorce, have completed a new *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" naming your former spouse. However, if you are facing a divorce, you must discuss this issue with your attorney.

How Do I Register?

It is important that you register through New York Legal Assistance Group and not directly through the U.S. Living Will Registry®. To begin the registration process, go to:

www.oucommunity.org and print out the U.S. Living Will Registry® registration agreement, download it, and complete it.

If you have problems downloading the form, please visit www.nytlc.org and look for the U.S. Living Will Registry® registration agreement, download it and complete it.

As explained above, the registration form gives the Registry permission to send a copy of your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" to health care providers. You must agree to inform the Registry if you ever decide to change your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will." The Registry electronically stores your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" and identifies it by your registration number, and, at your option, social security number. Health care providers can access documents using either the registration number found on your wallet card, by social security number (hospitals almost always have the social security number because they use it for billing purposes), or by a search of a last name and birth date.

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This triple access option of registration number, social security number, or last name and birth-date provides for maximum availability of your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" whenever and wherever it is needed. The Registry keeps social security numbers completely confidential and never releases them. Nonetheless, if you are uncomfortable with providing your social security number on your registration form, you have the option not to do so. If you do not provide your social security number, your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" will be identified only by your unique registration number. It then can be accessed with your wallet card or by a search of your name and birth date.

Registering Your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/"Living Will"

The registration form together with your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/"Living Will" may be returned by e-mail, mail, or fax.

E-mail of scanned documents to: tjanssen-spinosa@nylag.org
Mail: New York Legal Assistance Group
Total Life Choices Program
7 Hanover Square, 18th Floor
New York, NY 10004
Fax: (212) 714-7402

You will have peace of mind knowing that your *Halachic* Health Care Proxy/ "Living Will" is safe, secure and available to your family and health care providers whenever and wherever it is needed.

Sincerely,

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U.S. Living Will Registry® was founded by Joseph T. Barmakian, M.D., a New Jersey Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon. Dr. Barmakian has witnessed the ordeal of patients' families as they confront the painful, guilt-ridden decisions of life support and medical treatment. He has also felt the frustration of doctors who don't have access to patients' wishes. It was in 1996 that Dr. Barmakian first recognized the need for a registry service that not only recorded patients' advance directives, but also made it easier for health care facilities to obtain the information. Dr. Barmakian felt it was critical to establish a system which provides medical personnel and patient's families with advance directives whenever and wherever they are needed while maintaining the patient's privacy and confidentiality. U.S. Living Will Registry® fulfills these criteria, providing easy, 24-hour access to patients' wishes.

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