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SGMC - Legal News

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Areas of Practice:

- **Family Law**
- **Real Estate**
- **Bankruptcy**
- **Civil Matters**
- **Probate**
- **Foreclosure**
- **Traffic**
- **And more.**

QUICK LEGAL TIP:
**Did you know that
you can now list a
beneficiary on an
Illinois vehicle
title?**

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The New Civil Union Law – Effective on June 1, 2011

The Illinois Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act goes into effect on June 1, 2011. It is intended to extend to civil union partners the same protections, obligations, benefits and responsibilities that currently exist between married couples under Illinois law. (The Act does not apply to any Federal benefits). It is open to both same sex and opposite sex couples.

Some examples of the benefits now afforded to

civil union couples include: The right to make medical decisions, make hospital visits, and receive medical information about the other party; the right to inherit money or property from the other party in the absence of a will; the right to file joint Illinois income tax returns, the right to receive some employment benefits as the surviving civil union party; the right to a name change when entering a civil union, the right to receive

maintenance or child support upon the dissolution of the union; the right to have a pre-civil union agreement similar to a prenuptial agreement. For seniors, the right to assist with your partner's medical care and decisions without losing your social security benefits.

You should consult your attorney before entering into a civil union. It is important that you understand how this law will affect you and benefit you.

What are Advance Directives ?

Advance directives is a term that refers to various documents which allow you to arrange and direct your medical treatment. Even when you become unable to make your medical decisions, these documents will inform your family and your medical providers what your medical care wishes are. These directives include the following documents:

A Health Care Power of Attorney allows you to appoint an individual to make your medical decisions. This individual

acts as your agent and decides your medical care. The type of care you want is set forth in the document.

A Living Will applies when you have a terminal illness. It tells your health care providers what type of life sustaining treatment that you want.

A Mental Health Treatment Preference Declaration allows you to state whether you want electroconvulsive treatment or psychotropic drugs if you have a mental illness and can no longer

make these decisions.

A Do Not Resuscitate Order tells your medical providers not to attempt CPR if your heart or breathing stops. This DNR Order must be signed by your personal physician and is entered into your medical record.

Having some or all of these documents will benefit both you and your family.

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