

BC Notaries
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**BC Notaries Encourage British Columbians to Learn More About
Health, Estate and Financial Affairs Planning Tools**

Notaries Support Recent Changes to Advance Care Planning Legislation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vancouver, BC – The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia supports legislative changes to various advance care planning documents including powers of attorney, advance directives, and representation agreements.

“BC Notaries welcome the recent changes to powers of attorney and representation agreements which are intended to reduce the risk of financial abuse, and to encourage advance care planning. We strongly encourage all British Columbians to learn more about the tools that are available to them to legally document their preferences and instructions for future financial, personal, and health care decisions,” said John Eastwood, President of BC Notaries and a Notary Public.

Last month, new legislation became effective which, among many other modifications, included these revisions:

1. Clear guidelines for the duties and responsibilities of “attorneys” (designated under a power of attorney).
2. An opportunity to be more specific in planning documents about the extent of the authority signatories wish to grant to their attorney (such as transferring property to their own names, making charitable donations, and family gifting).
3. The ability to give health care instructions directly to a health care provider when one doesn’t want to burden a family member with serious health care decisions (through a new document called an advance directive).
4. Expanded Notaries’ authority in the preparation and witnessing of representation agreements (a planning document which outlines future health care, end of life and, in some cases, routine financial management).

“Many of these changes aim to make planning documents clearer and to protect vulnerable adults from financial abuse, which happens more frequently than one might expect. But by far the best and only way to be sure your intentions are honoured is to legally document your instructions for your future healthcare and management of your finances in the event you are unable to make these decisions yourself,” said Laurie Salvador, a Vancouver Island-based Notary.

A November 2010 poll conducted by Mustel Group Research determined that on average only 41% of British Columbians have a power of attorney and 28% a representation agreement.

“As Notaries who advise clients on personal planning, we see families and friendships torn apart by conflict when an individual’s wishes for their healthcare has not been clearly and legally documented,” said Lorne Mann, a Notary in Creston, B.C. “Truly one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself or your family is clear instructions on these critical issues and decisions. Once these tools are in place, everyone feels a huge sense of relief and certainty.”

BC Notaries have prepared an overview which clearly outlines the planning tools available to British Columbians and encourages families and individuals to learn more about them by reviewing it, and by calling their local Notary. To find a local Notary, visit www.notaries.bc.ca.

The Society of Notaries Public of BC represents more than 320 highly trained Notary professionals. Most have locally owned and operated offices and all provide personal assistance to clients around the province. Individuals, families, and businesses seek the services of BC Notaries for a wide range of non-contentious legal matters, including residential and commercial real estate transfers, mortgages, will and estate planning, powers of attorney, and other important documents.

The Notary’s Tradition of Trust spans 2000 years. Notaries first came to British Columbia over 100 years ago. They continue to serve their valued clients and their communities across the province.

For more information, please visit notaries.bc.ca.

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Editors: local Notaries are available in most areas of B.C. to discuss powers of attorney, representation agreements, wills and other advance care planning tools, and other Notary services. To reach them or for more information, please call:

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