

Essential Documents: Preparing for COVID-19

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March 26, 2020



In this unprecedented and uncertain time, health experts are providing us with the facts about COVID-19.

Being well-informed enables us to know what measures to take in avoiding exposure to COVID-19 – starting with the most basic advice to "*wash your hands!*"

Our trusts and estates team also often find ourselves helping people prepare for the worst. Our most basic

advice is that everyone over the age of 18 should have in place three essential documents:

1. a **health care power of attorney** that names someone as your agent to make your medical decisions if you are unable to make them
2. a **HIPAA authorization** that allows the agent named under your health care power of attorney to have access to your medical records
3. a **durable power of attorney** that appoints an agent to handle your financial decisions so that someone can pay your bills and manage your assets if you are unable to do so

Regardless of your age or net worth, please make sure you and your family have these documents in place. Hopefully, you will not need them, but if you become ill, these basic documents will allow someone to step in and care for you immediately.

Our estate planning team is available to help you even during this time where the health experts ask us all to stay at home. We are conducting meetings by phone and video conference, and are available to help.

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