

RCW 71.32.010 Legislative declaration—Findings. (1) The legislature declares that an individual with capacity has the ability to control decisions relating to his or her own behavioral health care. The legislature finds that:

(a) Some behavioral health disorders cause individuals to fluctuate between capacity and incapacity;

(b) During periods when an individual's capacity is unclear, the individual may be unable to access needed treatment because the individual may be unable to give informed consent;

(c) Early treatment may prevent an individual from becoming so ill that involuntary treatment is necessary; and

(d) Individuals with behavioral health disorders need some method of expressing their instructions and preferences for treatment and providing advance consent to or refusal of treatment.

(2) The legislature recognizes that a mental health advance directive can be an essential tool for an individual to express his or her choices at a time when the effects of a behavioral health disorder have not deprived him or her of the power to express his or her instructions or preferences.

(3) The legislature further finds that:

(a) A mental health advance directive must provide the individual with a full range of choices;

(b) Individuals with behavioral health disorders have varying perspectives on whether they want to be able to revoke a directive during periods of incapacity;

(c) For a mental health advance directive to be an effective tool, individuals must be able to choose how they want their directives treated during periods of incapacity; and

(d) There must be clear standards so that treatment providers can readily discern an individual's treatment choices.

Consequently, the legislature affirms that, pursuant to other provisions of law, a validly executed mental health advance directive is to be respected by agents, guardians, and other surrogate decision makers, health care providers, professional persons, and health care facilities. [2021 c 287 s 1; 2003 c 283 s 1.]