Specific Decision Making  
Tara Kilkenny

The Adult Guardianship and Trusteeship Act provides for a variety of decision-making options to allow adults to be as autonomous as possible when making personal decisions.

One of those decision-making options, specific decision-making, is for adults who have lost the ability to:

- Consent to medical treatment or,
- Make a decision about where they will live

When a time sensitive decision must be made, a physician, nurse practitioner, or a dentist in the case of a dental procedure, must perform a capacity assessment to determine if the adult is unable to make the necessary decision. If the adult cannot make the decision then the Health Care Practitioner chooses a relative from a ranked list to make the decision for them.

Sometimes, it is possible to utilize Specific Decision-making even if the adult has a guardian in place. If the adult was found to have capacity in the area of healthcare or accommodation at the time the guardianship order was granted, then the guardian would not have authority to make that decision. If a PD has been made but does not grant authority for healthcare or accommodation then Specific Decision-making may be used. If the adult has a PD that has not been enacted in the healthcare or accommodation domain then follow the steps to complete a capacity assessment under the Personal Directive Act.

The specific decision-maker, involving the adult to the greatest extent possible, makes a one-time decision that must:

- Reflect and/or consider the adult’s:
  - wishes, values and beliefs
  - impact on quality of life
  - whether a less intrusive/less restrictive alternative would be as effective
- Consider the benefits and risks of treating or moving the adult
- Together with the Health Care Provider completes the correct Schedule and notify additional family or the OPGT

For additional information please visit:  
CompassionNET > Care and Safety > Capacity Assessment > Legal Acts or  
The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee website  
https://www.alberta.ca/specific-decision-making.aspx#toc-4

If your team encounters difficulty or has questions please contact the Mentoring Team Members at your site. If your site does not have a contact you can direct questions to:

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