

WHAT IS THE MISSION AND VISION OF THE OSDM?

The mission of the Office of Substitute Decision Maker (OSDM) is to preserve individual independence through a person-centered process by:

- Providing education;
- Providing assistance to public and private substitute decision makers;
- When necessary, assisting in substitute decision-making proceedings; and
- Providing substitute decision-making services in the least restrictive manner.

In meeting these goals, the OSDM will realize its vision of ensuring the best outcome for every Iowan.

For additional information about the OSDM, please visit www.iowaaging.gov or call 800.532.3213.



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WHAT IS THE OFFICE OF SUBSTITUTE DECISION MAKER?

The Office of Substitute Decision Maker (OSDM) is established in Iowa Code 231E and strives to enhance the quality of life for lowans who are not capable of making their own decisions about legal, financial or health care matters.

Depending on the situation, the OSDM may act as an individual's guardian; conservator; attorney-in-fact under a health care power of attorney document; agent under a financial power of attorney document; personal representative; or representative payee.

The OSDM will only be appointed by the court as the substitute decision maker of last resort.

To be eligible, an individual must be an Iowa resident who is at least 18 years old and:

- Have no appropriate or responsible person available to serve as a substitute decision maker; or
- Be without adequate resources to compensate a substitute decision maker.

WHAT ARE THE OSDM'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

The OSDM is responsible for:

- Assisting individuals in finding alternatives to substitute decision-making services and the least intrusive means of assistance before their rights and independence are limited;
- Intervening in cases where an appointed guardian or conservator is not fulfilling prescribed duties, or when the best interests of the ward require intervention;
- Serving as the substitute decision maker of last resort for lowans in need;
- Working with various state agencies and the judicial branch to establish a referral system for the provision of services;
- Providing information and referrals to the general public regarding substitute decision-making services;
- Implementing an education and training program for both public and private substitute decision makers; and
- Finalizing an individual's affairs after his/her death when no willing or appropriate person is available.

HOW DOES THE OSDM MAKE DECISIONS?

When it comes to making decisions on behalf of lowans who are not capable of making their own decisions about health care and other personal matters, the OSDM takes a number of factors into consideration, including:

The Individual's Wishes

If the individual previously expressed his/her wishes regarding a specific situation (whether in conversation or through a document such as a living will), the OSDM will consider that information and try to determine what the person would have wanted.

The Individual's Best Interests

The OSDM will take a variety of possible solutions into consideration before making decisions on an individual's behalf to ensure the best possible outcomes. This includes taking the person's values and beliefs into consideration, as well as working to improve his/her overall well-being.

Input of the Individual's Caregivers

The OSDM will consult with an individual's health care team, family, friends, religious or spiritual leaders and others to determine the best course of action for the individual.