

What kind of plans have you made?

By GAIL JOHNSON, Legacy House

No one plans to be sick or disabled, and no one plans what day they will die. But one thing is for certain — at least one of those things will happen to all of us.

If you were to become sick or disabled who would do your banking and pay your bills? What happens if your husband has a stroke and is unable to communicate with you? Did he tell you that he put all the retirement and investment papers in a box in the closet?

If you should pass on, does anyone know that your Last Will and Testament is filed in your desk drawer? Have you discussed funeral arrangements such as burial versus cremation? Though this type of planning is tedious at best, it lets others know what you want or need.

Your first step in getting your affairs together would be to gather all your personal records. Your personal records should tell who you are and what you have done.

Examples would be:

- Full legal name
- Social Security number
- Legal residence
- Date and place of birth
- Name, addresses and phone numbers of spouse, children, relatives and close friends
- Names and phone numbers of doctors, lawyer and financial advisor
- Location of living will, location of birth and death certificates and certificates of marriage, divorce, citizenship and adoption
- Medications taken regularly
- Employers and dates of employment

- Education and military records
- Names and phone numbers of religious contacts

Your second step would be to collect all your financial records. Your financial records will let others know where your income is coming from, debts and when they are due.

Examples would be:

- Sources of income (IRAs, 401(k) s, pension funds etc.
- Investment income (property, stocks, bonds)

Insurance information (life, health, long-term care, home, car)

- Credit and debit card names and number
- Names of your banks and credit unions along with their account numbers and location of safe deposit box if you have one
- Most up to date will with original signature
- Location of original deed of trust for your home and car title and registration
- Pre-paid burial or cremation arrangements (or at least what your desire would be upon death)

Thirdly, you might want to talk to an attorney about what is known as a general or medical power of attorney. Below are a couple of examples.

A durable general power of attorney gives the person whom you designate broad powers to handle your property during your lifetime (or until revoked), which may include powers to mortgage, sell or otherwise dispose of any real or personal property without advance notice to you or approval by you.

A nondurable general power of attorney gives the same powers as the general durable power of attorney except ceases to be effective should you become disabled or incompetent.

A medical power of attorney gives the person you name as your agent the authority to make any and all health care decisions for you in accordance with your wishes when you are no longer

capable of making them yourself.

Now that you have collected your personal and financial records, a will and power of attorney papers, find a safe place to put them and make sure someone knows how to get to them if something should happen.

As I said, this may be a tedious job, but boy will you (and your family) sleep better when it is done.

For additional information call Gail Johnson at Legacy House, 773-8218.