

HB 973 -- Health Care Directives

Sponsor: Davis

This bill prohibits the withholding or withdrawal of nutrition or hydration from a patient without a specific written power of attorney granting the authority. Before a physician, guardian, or attorney-in-fact may authorize the removal of nutrition or hydration, the physician must attempt to explain the consequences to the patient and give the patient an opportunity to respond. Any person who violates this provision is guilty of a class D felony and, in the event of death or serious physical injury, may be held civilly and criminally liable.

The provision will not prevent the withdrawal or withholding of medical treatment if the attending physician decides that the patient cannot tolerate the treatment. However, no one may authorize the removal of nutrition or hydration by natural means with the intent of causing death to the patient.