



HANDBOOK

FOR GUARDIANS

OF

INCAPACITATED PERSONS

**Court of Common Pleas
Orphans' Court Division
Thirtieth Judicial District of Pennsylvania
Crawford County Courthouse
Meadville, Pennsylvania**



JUDGES CHAMBERS

THIRTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

COURTHOUSE

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During our lifetimes, each of us may be in contact with friends or relatives who have become unable to make proper decisions concerning their personal or financial well-being. Pennsylvania law refers to these individuals as being incapacitated and there are procedures to allow our Courts to evaluate them and appoint appropriate guardians to assist them.

This handbook will provide general information for guardians and potential guardians for individuals who may be incapacitated.

The judges of Crawford County especially thank former Crawford County President Judge Gordon R. Miller who prepared the first version of this handbook based on a similar handbook created by the late Honorable Robert M. Fischer, a former Orphans' Court Judge from Erie County, with the help of a group of Erie County lawyers.

Anthony J. Vardaro, President Judge

INTRODUCTION

You are either considering becoming a guardian of a person who is partially or totally unable to manage his or her financial resources or unable to meet the essential needs of physical health and safety or you have already been appointed as guardian of such a person. This is a very important responsibility and may require a significant time commitment from you.

When someone is given the right to handle the affairs of another person there are many strict legal requirements and duties that apply. The law jealously protects persons who cannot handle their own affairs.

This booklet is an attempt to explain the “ins and outs” of Pennsylvania law as it pertains to incapacitated persons. In April of 1992 the Legislature of Pennsylvania passed, and the Governor of Pennsylvania signed, a new law dealing with incapacitated persons. The law sets forth in detail the definitions of incapacitated persons, the method by which guardians are appointed, the duties of a guardian and the role of the Orphans’ Court in overseeing the entire process. This Handbook adopts a question-and-answer format to assist you in understanding this process in the hope that the questions which arise regarding a guardian’s duties and obligations will be answered.

It is important to know that there are two classifications of guardians – guardians of the person and guardians of the estate. A guardian of the estate is responsible for the handling the financial affairs of the incapacitated person. A guardian of the person is responsible for the day-to-day care of an incapacitated person such as living accommodations, meals, personal care, transportation, recreation, medical care and the like.

It is the responsibility of the Orphans’ Court to see to it that the guardianships are being properly performed so that both the financial and personal needs of incapacitated persons are being met. Representatives of the Court may visit you annually to verify that you are meeting those needs. Additionally, reports must be filed outlining the care given to the incapacitated person and itemizing the income received and the monies spent for that person.

As you can well appreciate, your attorney will play a key role in the guardianship process. Any questions that you might have about your responsibilities or obligations should be addressed first to your attorney. It may also be in your best interest to discuss all major issues regarding your incapacitated person with the family.

PENNSYLVANIA HANDBOOK FOR GUARDIANS

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CAUTION: THIS HANDBOOK IS BASED ON INFORMATION THAT WAS AVAILABLE IN FEBRUARY OF 2010. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MAKE CHANGES IN THE HANDBOOK EVERY TIME INFORMATION OR LAW CHANGES. **THEREFORE,** YOU SHOULD CONSULT YOUR ATTORNEY BEFORE TAKING ANY SIGNIFICANT ACTION DISCUSSED IN THIS HANDBOOK. ALSO, YOU SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THE HANDBOOK CANNOT COVER EVERY SITUATION THAT YOU MAY FACE. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUR ATTORNEY TO ASSIST YOU IN DEALING WITH SPECIAL SITUATIONS.

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I: THE “WHO, WHAT, WHEN AND WHERE”

The following series of questions and answers are designed to highlight the primary steps for the appointment of a guardian for an incapacitated person. The procedures described are those which apply when a guardian is needed for a person who is an adult and is unable to look after his or her own affairs.

The law presumes that a minor, who is any person under the age of 18, has a limited ability to act with respect to his or her property. Generally, the parent of a minor acts with respect to the minor's personal matters, but a guardian may be appointed in special circumstances, including the ownership of substantial property by a minor. There is a separate section of the Pennsylvania Probate, Estates and Fiduciary Code which addresses the circumstances and procedures for the appointment of a guardian for a minor. The information set forth hereafter is **not** applicable to minors, but only to incapacitated persons.

QUESTION: WHEN SHOULD THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN FOR AN INCAPACITATED PERSON BE CONSIDERED?

ANSWER: Whenever a person is thought to be incapacitated, it is appropriate to consider whether the appointment of a guardian is necessary or desirable. Pennsylvania law defines an incapacitated person as follows:

Adults whose abilities to receive and evaluate information effectively and communicate decisions in any way are impaired to such a significant extent that they are partially or totally unable to manage their financial resources or to meet essential requirements for their physical health and safety.

QUESTION: WHO MAY ASK THAT A GUARDIAN BE APPOINTED?

ANSWER: Any person interested in the welfare of an incapacitated person may seek the appointment of a guardian for that person.

QUESTION: WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN?

ANSWER: A guardian may be appointed only by a judge of the Orphans' Court of the Court of Common Pleas of the county where the incapacitated person resides. In certain cases the Court may appoint a guardian for an incapacitated person who lives outside the county if the person owns property in the county. A hearing is required.

QUESTION: WHO MAY BE APPOINTED GUARDIAN?

ANSWER: The Court, after a hearing, may appoint as guardian any qualified individual, a corporate fiduciary (i.e., a bank), a non-profit corporation, a guardianship support agency or a county agency. In the case of a person who is a patient in a state facility the Court may also appoint, only as guardian of the estate, the guardian officer of the appropriate state facility.

The Court will not appoint a person or entity providing residential services for a fee (i.e., a nursing home) to the incapacitated person or any other person whose interests conflict with those of the incapacitated person except where it is clearly demonstrated that no other alternative exists. If appropriate, the Court will give preference to someone named by the incapacitated person.

QUESTION: ARE CO-GUARDIANS PERMISSIBLE?

ANSWER: It is possible to have the Court appoint a co-guardian of the estate or person should the Court, in its discretion, deem such an appointment advisable.

QUESTION: WHO WILL THE COURT APPOINT AS A GUARDIAN WHEN NO PROPER PERSON IS AVAILABLE FOR APPOINTMENT?

ANSWER: Guardianship support agencies approved by the Orphans' Court may be appointed as the guardian of the estate or person, or both, when no qualified person or corporate fiduciary is willing to serve. In certain instances those agencies may be available to assist petitioners and/or individual guardians. Although those receiving guardian services from guardian agencies will be charged for services they provide, the charges will be adjusted to meet the ability of the incapacitated person to pay them and guardian support agencies are required to provide their services at minimal cost.

QUESTION: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ASSIST AN INCAPACITATED PERSON IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION?

ANSWER: The Court may appoint an emergency guardian of the person or estate when it finds, upon clear and convincing evidence, that the person is incapacitated and that failure to make an emergency appointment will result in irreparable harm to the person or estate. The Court will follow the same petition hearing requirements of a permanent guardianship except if it finds, due to the emergency, that notice and hearing are not practical.

An emergency guardianship of the person remains in effect for up to seventy-two (72) hours, but may be extended for an additional twenty (20) days. The emergency guardianship powers will be determined by the Court according to the needs of the incapacitated person. For example, an emergency guardianship may be obtained if a person is in need of immediate medical care.

An emergency guardianship of the estate remains in effect for up to thirty (30) days.

II: TYPES OF GUARDIANSHIPS

QUESTION: WHAT TYPES OF GUARDIANSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE?

ANSWER: The Court may appoint a guardian of the person and/or a guardian of the estate. Each type of guardianship may be **plenary**, that is, unlimited, or **limited** to just those specific powers necessary to meet the ward's needs. (An individual who has been determined by the Court to be incapacitated is referred to as the "ward" of the Court and of the guardians.)

QUESTION: WHAT MAY A GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON DO?

ANSWER: A **plenary** guardian of the person has the authority to make all decisions necessary for the personal well being of the incapacitated person. For example, the guardian may place the ward in a nursing home or make medical decisions, including life or death choices.

A **limited** guardian of the person has only those powers specifically set forth in the Court's decree.

When considering a guardianship, it is important to know the current and expected needs of the incapacitated person and the present ability of that individual to meet those needs.

QUESTION: ARE THERE LIMITS TO THE POWERS OF THE GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON?

ANSWER: Yes. Unless specifically approved by Court Order, a guardian of the person **cannot** consent on behalf of the ward to an abortion, sterilization, psychosurgery, electric shock treatment, removal of a healthy body part or consent to medical experimentation. A guardian may not block the marriage of the ward or refuse to consent to a divorce.

Even the Court may not give a guardian permission to admit the ward to a mental unit or to consent to the relinquishment of parental rights.

QUESTION: ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF GUARDIANS OF THE ESTATE?

ANSWER: Yes. There are two types of guardians of the estate.

Limited Guardian of the Estate: Upon a finding that the person is **partially** incapacitated and in need of guardianship services, the Court will appoint a LIMITED guardian of the estate and will specifically define the powers and authority of the limited guardian.

Plenary Guardian of the Estate: If the Court finds that the person is **totally** incapacitated, the Court will appoint a PLENARY guardian of the estate. A plenary guardian manages all of the incapacitated person's assets and financial affairs.

QUESTION: WHAT MAY A GUARDIAN OF THE ESTATE DO?

ANSWER: The guardian of the estate gathers the assets of the incapacitated person, preserves them and invests them in interest bearing accounts and low-risk income producing securities. The guardian of the estate also pays the bills for the incapacitated person from the ward's funds.

Generally speaking, a **plenary** guardian of the estate has the authority to handle all of the financial affairs of the ward, including such things as:

- (a) Buy and sell assets, investments and real estate (subject to certain limitations);
- (b) Operate a business which is part of the estate;
- (c) Incorporate a business which is part of the estate;
- (d) Vote any stocks which are held by the estate;
- (e) Accept a deed in lieu of foreclosure;
- (f) Compromise or settle controversies (with Court approval);

- (g) Purchase liability insurance;
- (h) Lease property of the estate, collect income and rents; and
- (i) Make reasonable expenditures to preserve property of the estate.

A **limited** guardian of the estate has only those powers specifically set forth in the Court's decree.

III: BEGINNING THE GUARDIANSHIP PROCESS

QUESTION: HOW IS THE NEED FOR A GUARDIAN PRESENTED TO THE COURT?

ANSWER: A petition must be filed with the Orphans' Court of the county. In most cases the petition would be prepared by an attorney hired by the person who asks for the appointment of a guardianship. The petition must contain certain information. The following is a summary of that information:

- (a) The name, age, residence and post office address of the alleged incapacitated person;
- (b) The names and addresses of the husband or wife, parents and adult heirs of the alleged incapacitated person;
- (c) The name and address of the person or institution providing residential services to the alleged incapacitated person;
- (d) The names and addresses of other service providers;
- (e) The name and address of the person or entity whom the petitioner asks to be appointed guardian;
- (f) A statement that the proposed guardian has no interest opposed to the alleged incapacitated person;
- (g) The reason why guardianship is requested;
- (h) A description of the physical and mental limitations of the alleged incapacitated person;
- (i) The steps taken to find other alternatives;
- (j) The specific areas of incapacity over which it is requested that the guardian be given authority; and
- (k) The qualifications of the proposed guardian.

QUESTION: WHO MUST BE NOTIFIED WHEN THE PETITION IS FILED WITH THE COURT?

- ANSWER:**
1. The alleged incapacitated person for whom the appointment of a guardian is requested.
 2. All persons within Pennsylvania who are 18 years old or older and who would share in the property of the alleged incapacitated person if that person died without a will.
 3. All persons or institutions providing residential services to the alleged incapacitated person.
 4. Such other persons as the Court may direct.

QUESTION: WHAT TYPE OF NOTICE IS REQUIRED?

ANSWER: Written notice must be given in large type and in simple language explaining the purpose and seriousness of the guardianship hearing and the rights that can be lost as a result. The date, time and place of the hearing on the petition and an explanation of all rights, including the right to a free attorney must be stated. The Court will provide the notice. This notice must be served personally on the alleged incapacitated person, but may also be served upon other persons in any manner the Court directs.

QUESTION: WHAT IF THE INCAPCITATED PERSON DOES NOT HAVE AN ATTORNEY?

ANSWER: The petitioner must notify the Court at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled hearing if a lawyer has not been retained by or on behalf of the alleged incapacitated person. The Court may then, in appropriate cases, appoint an attorney to represent the alleged incapacitated person.

QUESTION: WHEN WILL THE HEARING TAKE PLACE:

ANSWER: The hearing will take place when the Court schedule permits. The time and place of the hearing will be fixed by the Court when the petition is presented. The hearing may not be sooner than twenty (20) days after the petition is served upon the alleged incapacitated person.

In an emergency the Court may appoint a guardian of the person without notice for up to seventy-two (72) hours and may continue that appointment for up to twenty (20) days after expiration of the initial emergency order. An emergency guardian of the estate may be appointed for up to thirty (30) days.

QUESTION: WHERE WILL THE HEARING TAKE PLACE?

ANSWER: In most instances the hearing will take place in the courtroom of the judge who will hear the petition at the county courthouse. The law permits the hearing to be conducted at the residence of the person who is allegedly to be incapacitated, but such hearings are relatively rare and a specific reason would have to be given as to why the hearing should be held outside of the courtroom.

QUESTION: WHO ATTENDS THE HEARING?

- ANSWER:**
1. The petitioner, as the person initiating the guardianship proceeding, would generally be expected to attend. In certain cases the petitioner need not attend if the petitioner was not expected to offer any testimony.
 2. The alleged incapacitated person is required to be present at the hearing unless the Court is satisfied that the physical or mental condition of the alleged incapacitated person would be harmed by being present or if it is impossible because the person is not in Pennsylvania. The testimony or deposition of a physician or licensed psychologist must be offered if the alleged incapacitated person is not able to appear because it would harm his or her physical and/or mental condition.
 3. The proposed guardian.
 4. The attorney for the petitioner.
 5. Witnesses with testimony or other evidence to offer.
 6. The attorney for the alleged incapacitated person, if there is one.
 7. Any interested person to whom notice of the proceeding was given and who desires to be present.

Any person alleged to be incapacitated or his or her attorney may request that the hearing be closed to the public. In that event, only persons entitled to present evidence such as the petitioner, the alleged incapacitated person and their counsel would be present at the hearing with the judge and the court officers.

QUESTION: WHAT PART DOES THE ALLEGEDLY INCAPACITATED PERSON HAVE IN THE HEARING?

ANSWER: Allegedly incapacitated persons have the right to present evidence concerning their capacity. They have the right to be represented by a lawyer and to have Court-appointed counsel if they cannot afford their own.

They have the right to seek the appointment of a physician by the Court to determine their capacity. Allegedly incapacitated persons have the right to cross-examine witnesses and to demand that the facts be heard by a jury.

QUESTION: WHAT FACTS MUST BE ESTABLISHED A THE HEARING?

ANSWER: The Court will consider evidence at the hearing concerning:

1. The nature of any condition or disability which limits the individual's ability to make and express decisions.
2. The extent of the individual's ability to make and express decisions.

3. The need for guardianship services, if any, in light of the availability of the family, friends and other support services to assist the individual in making decisions and in light of the existence, if any, of advance directives such as durable powers of attorney or trusts.
4. The type of guardian, limited or plenary, of the person or estate, needed based on the nature of any condition or disability or ability to make and express decisions.
5. The length of time the guardianship would last.

QUESTION: HOW IS EVIDENCE PRESENTED?

ANSWER: Generally, evidence is offered under oath and in the courtroom.

To establish incapacity, the petitioner must present testimony in person or by deposition from individuals qualified by training and experience in evaluating individuals with an incapacity of the type alleged by the petitioner. The testimony should establish the nature and extent of the alleged incapacities and disabilities and the person's mental, emotional and physical condition; adaptive behavior and social skills.

The petitioner must also present evidence regarding the services being utilized to meet essential requirements for the alleged incapacitated person's physical health and safety; the services being utilized to manage the person's financial resources or to develop or regain the person's abilities; evidence regarding the types of assistance required by the person and why no less restrictive alternatives would be appropriate; and evidence regarding the probability that the extent of the person's incapacities may significantly lessen or change.

QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE PROBABLE RESULTS OF THE HEARING?

ANSWER: The Court could determine that the proceeding has not been instituted to aid or benefit the alleged incapacitated person or that it does not have jurisdiction over the petition in question. In both these instances the proceedings would be dismissed. The Court could determine that the allegedly incapacitated person was able to receive and evaluate information effectively, was able to communicate decisions and that a guardian was not necessary.

Where the Court is satisfied upon the presentation of clear and convincing evidence that the person about whom the petition has been filed is incapacitated, the Court will appoint a guardian who may be (1) a limited or plenary guardian of the person; (2) a limited or plenary guardian of the estate; or some combination of both.

QUESTION: WHO PAYS THE EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN?

ANSWER: Generally, if the alleged incapacitated person has property sufficient to pay the expenses of the proceeding, those expenses would be paid from the incapacitated person's property by the guardian after appointment. If the petitioner was unsuccessful in securing the appointment of a guardian, the petitioner would have to pay the expenses.

In those instances where the alleged incapacitated person does not have sufficient assets to pay the expenses, the petitioner may request the Court to excuse the payment of filing fees and may also ask the Court to appoint a physician to review the alleged incapacitated person's capacity. The Court may order the county to pay for an attorney or evaluation expenses when an alleged incapacitated person cannot pay.

VI: NOW THAT YOU ARE A GUARDIAN

QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF GUARDIANS?

ANSWER: All guardians have a legal duty to protect the rights and property of the incapacitated person. A guardian may be held personally liable by the Court for mismanagement of the ward's affairs. This is called a "fiduciary duty."

QUESTION: WHAT IS BOND?

ANSWER: At the hearing the Court will determine if it will be necessary for the guardian to file a bond and, if so, its amount. The premium for the bond can be paid from the assets of the ward.

A bond is a type of insurance policy that guarantees the guardian's faithful performance of all duties. If the guardian misappropriates property of the ward's estate and is unable to repay, the bonding company will pay the value of the property to the incapacitated person's estate. The bonding company would then have a legal claim against the guardian for the value of the property which was taken.

QUESTION: WHAT RIGHTS DOES THE WARD HAVE?

ANSWER: To the extent of their ability, incapacitated persons have the right to participate in decisions affecting their quality of life. The guardian must allow the ward to take an active role in planning support services and the ward has the right to petition the Court for a review of the guardianship at any time.

QUESTION: WHAT DOES A GUARDIAN DO IF THE WARD OBJECTS TO A PARTICULAR PROGRAM?

ANSWER: The guardian must report to the Court if the incapacitated person has a known objection to a specific act or omission. The Court can then determine if the guardian is correct in the assessment of the needs of the ward.

QUESTION: CAN THE WARD EXECUTE A WILL OR REVISE AN ESTATE PLAN AFTER BEING DETERMINED TO BE INCAPACITATED?

ANSWER: No. An incapacitated person cannot execute a will or revise his estate plan during any period in which he has been determined to be incapacitated by the Court.

However, the Court, upon Petition and with notice to all interested parties, may permit incapacitated person, through their guardians, to: make gifts, disclaim interests in property, exercise powers of appointments, enter into contracts, create trusts, change

beneficiaries on life insurance policies, make certain elections relative to inheriting property, change his domicile and make other estate planning type arrangements.

QUESTION: CAN THE WARD'S ASSETS BE USED FOR THE GUARDIAN'S OWN PURPOSES?

ANSWER: Absolutely not. The guardian must preserve the assets of the incapacitated person and must make reasonable expenditures of those assets only for the benefit of the ward. If a guardian of the estate misappropriates the ward's property for his own benefit, the Court will require the guardian to pay the property back to the estate of the incapacitated person and may appoint a new guardian of the estate at that time. Misappropriation of the ward's property may also result in criminal charges being brought against a guardian.

However, the guardian of the estate may be entitled to reimbursement for out-of-pocket costs which are incurred as the result of the guardianship.

QUESTION: WHO CAN ASSIST THE GUARDIAN?

ANSWER: An attorney can assist the guardian in filing reports, providing information on permissible investments and otherwise fulfilling their duties. Guardianship support agencies may also be available to assist guardians in these areas.

V: GUARDIAN'S DUTY TO FILE ANNUAL REPORTS

QUESTION: MUST THE GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON REPORT TO THE COURT?

ANSWER: Yes. At least once within the first twelve (12) months of the appointment and annually thereafter, the guardian of the person, whether plenary or limited, must file a report with the Court outlining the guardian's performance. The guardian must state the current residence of the ward and the type of placement. The guardian must also indicate the ward's health and mental condition, living arrangements and support program. The guardians must list the number of the guardians' wards, the visits with the ward, the length of each visit and give an opinion as to whether the guardianship should be continued. A final report must be filed within sixty (60) days after the death of the incapacitated person.

QUESTION: MUST THE GUARDIAN OF THE ESTATE REPORT TO THE COURT?

ANSWER: Yes. Within ninety (90) days of appointment, the guardian of the estate, whether plenary or limited, must file an Inventory with the Court itemizing all the financial assets of the ward. Subject to any limits set by the Court, the guardian must take control of those assets and open up an account with the financial institution in the name of the guardian, as guardian of the ward.

The Inventory should include an appraisal of personal property; a statement of real estate owned by the ward and a statement of any property which the guardian expects to acquire thereafter.

Thereafter, at least once within the first twelve (12) months of the appointment and annually thereafter, the guardian of the estate must file a report with the Court specifying

the income received on behalf of the ward by the guardian and the expenditures made by the guardian on behalf of the ward. The Court may require that the report be filed more frequently. A final report must be filed within sixty (60) days after the death of the ward.

The annual report should include the following information:

- (i) Current principal and how it is invested;
- (ii) Current income;
- (iii) Expenditures of principal and income since the last report; and
- (iv) Needs of the incapacitated person for which the guardian has provided since the last report.

QUESTION: WHAT RECORDS SHOULD A GUARDIAN KEEP?

ANSWER: All receipts for expenditures paid on behalf of the incapacitated person should be kept until the annual report is approved by the Court. Bank statements and information regarding assets, investments and insurance should also be kept until the annual report is approved by the Court.

QUESTION: WHEN ARE GUARDIAN'S REPORTS DUE?

ANSWER: Generally, the annual reports are due one (1) year from the date of the guardians' appointment and every year thereafter. The exact date will be specified in the Court's Order.

QUESTION: WHERE IS THE REPORT FILED?

ANSWER: The reports should be filed with the Clerk of Courts on the first floor of the Crawford County Courthouse. A minimal filing fee will be charged and this cost may be deducted from the ward's assets.

QUESTION: WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE REPORT IS FILED?

ANSWER: The report will be reviewed and placed in the Court's file. A Court representative will contact you when the report is approved or if additional information is required.

VI: TERMINATION OR MODIFICATION OF GUARDIANSHIPS

QUESTION: HOW LONG DOES A GUARDIAN REMAIN IN OFFICE?

ANSWER: Generally, a guardian's appointment is expected to be permanent. Absent a circumstance where the condition of the incapacitated person is subject to change by reason of elapsed time, an appointment will be for an indefinite period ending, if not sooner, upon the death of the incapacitated person.

Guardianships are terminated if the wards regain their ability to make their own rational decisions. Guardianships may be modified in scope if the wards regain some of that capacity.

If a guardian is unable to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the guardianship, the guardian should notify the Court in writing and the Court will appoint a new guardian.

QUESTION: WHAT HAPPENS IF THE GUARDIAN DIES OR WANTS TO RESIGN?

ANSWER: The Court, after notice to the parties, may appoint a succeeding guardian to fill a vacancy in the guardianship. If the deceased guardian was a parent and has directed in a will a person to be guardian of the incapacitated child, the Court will give preference to that person.

QUESTION: WHAT IF THERE IS A CHANGE IN THE WARD'S CONDITION?

ANSWER: In the case of a change of condition, the Orphan's Court will hold a hearing to determine the current condition of the ward. If individuals are no longer incapacitated, the Court will find that they have regained their capacity and will terminate the guardianship. On the other hand, if there had been a limited guardianship initially and the ward has become worse in condition, the Court may increase the powers of the guardianship.

QUESTION: WHAT ABOUT REPORTS WHERE THE GUARDIANSHIP IS NO LONGER NEEDED, AS IN THE DEATH OF THE WARD OR THE REGAINING OF CAPACITY?

ANSWER: The guardian, on completion of duties, is required to prepare an accounting for all activities by the guardian during the time of the service from the last filed account to the date of the ward's death or Court Order finding a resumption of capacity.

An Account and Audit is prepared for the Court's review reflecting the original assets of the ward, the income that was earned for the guardianship, the expenses that were paid on behalf of the ward, the resulting funds available for distribution and a suggested schedule of distribution for the Court's review.

If the ward has died, notice and a copy of the Account are given to all of the heirs of the ward so that they may review the document and submit any questions they may have about the administration of the ward's estate to the Court. If the ward has regained capacity, notice and a copy of the Account are given to the ward for the same reason.

After review of the account by interested parties and the Court, if all is satisfactory, the Court approves the account and the guardian is discharged.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON

APPENDIX

SAMPLE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GUARDIAN OF THE ESTATE



JUDGES CHAMBERS

THIRTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

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TO: ALL GUARDIANS

FROM: Anthony J. Vardaro, President Judge

DATE: February 11, 2011

The Order appointing you as a guardian specified that you must file reports at certain time periods. Please refer to that order to be sure you know when those reports are due.

Prior to filing your reports, you must send copies to all parties in interest listed in the original petition for your appointment. **Please note:** At the end of your report you must certify that the documents are accurate and complete and that you have sent copies along with the required notice to all parties in interest.

Your report must be filed by its due date in the Office of the Clerk of the Orphans' Court located on the first floor of the Crawford County Courthouse at 903 Diamond Park, Meadville, Pennsylvania. There will be a fee for the filing and auditing of the report and you should have a check from your guardian's account with you to pay that fee.

The report may be submitted by mail but if you decide to do so, you should call the Office of the Clerk at (814) 333-7440 to determine the correct fee so that you may enclose a check in that amount with the documents you are mailing.

After you have filed the required report, the documents will be reviewed by the Court and you will be notified if the report has been approved or if additional information is required. If you have filed a report as guardian of the estate and if it has been approved, the total shown at paragraph 7 of that report should be your starting point and inserted at paragraph 4 of your next report.

