

Child in college? Get this important document

Posted by Cheryl Costa September 23, 2010 09:39 AM

http://www.boston.com/business/personalfinance/managingyourmoney/archives/2010/09/child_in_colleg.html

If you have recently sent a son or daughter off to college, it is critically important that you have a signed Health Care Power of Attorney (HCPOA) in place. This document is important because once your child turns 18, they are legally recognized as an adult and the colleges they are attending generally cannot share medical information with you.

It is not that the colleges don't want to share information, but under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), a patient's health information must be kept private once the patient is recognized as an adult. And this privacy extends to the parents of the student. So, if your child becomes ill at school, you might not be able to get any information on their health status.

To avoid this situation, you should have a properly executed HCPOA in place. This form will allow you to make medical decisions for your child. Your attorney can draft this form for you or you can look for a form on line. If your child is attending a school in another state, be sure to use the form for that state. It is also a good idea to have a HIPAA release form in place as well.