

BOLHOUSE, BAAR & LEFERE, P.C.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

POAs for Your College-Bound Child

Jamie J. Vander Kolk

July 2012

The graduation open house was a success, the laptop and microwave have been purchased, and the sheets and towels are ready to go ... sound familiar? Then chances are you have someone headed off to college next month.

Hopefully your student will be home for Thanksgiving, but what if he or she needs help before then? Because your child became an adult at age 18, you may be surprised to learn how much of their information is no longer accessible to you. If you need to talk to your child's doctor, for example, or retrieve immunization records on their behalf, you will need specific written authorization to do so. You cannot get test results or any medical information regarding your child without it. Similarly, if you would like to know your child's grades or attendance, you will need his or her written permission – even if you are the one footing the tuition bill. And, what if your child asks you to transfer money from that bank account funded with proceeds from their summer job? Unless you are a joint owner or authorized on the account, you will need written permission to do so.

We tend to think of powers of attorney (“POAs”) as helpful in caring for our elderly loved ones. However, these POAs (medical and financial) can be a similarly effective tool for college students as well. Understandably, young adults may be hesitant to give mom and dad the equivalent of an “all access” pass to their lives. But POAs can be drafted to protect your child's privacy and autonomy while at the same time granting the authorization needed for assistance and access to information – especially in an emergency situation.

We would be happy to advise you and your college-bound student on how to accomplish both through the use of limited powers of attorney.