

Advance Care Planning

When it comes to your health, what matters to you?

Should you be diagnosed with a serious illness, what choices would you make? Have you thought about it?

We know from a 2012 California HealthCare Foundation study that 80% of Californians want to talk to their doctors about end-of-life care but only 7% have had that conversation, which should include answers to a number of questions, such as: What medical treatments would you want or not want if you were unlikely to survive? How will your healthcare team know what to do? The survey also tells us that 82% say it's important to put their wishes in writing but only 23% have done so. 70% of us would like to die at home, yet 70% of us die in a hospital or care facility.

Who will speak for you if you are unable to speak for yourself?

We are fortunate to have organizations and tools to help guide us, and legislation to support our choices.

Your decisions matter.

Healthcare planning is important. One conversation can make a difference. Have you been avoiding it? Visit www.theconversationproject.org for your Starter Kit. You may also find other Advance Care Planning websites helpful, such as www.prepareforyourcare.org. Once you have had a conversation with loved ones, record your wishes in an Advance Directive, such as the California Advance Healthcare Directive which is available at <https://www.ih4health.org/our-services/advance-directive/> and translated in 7 languages.

Identify who will act on your behalf if you cannot communicate. Schedule an appointment with your doctor and provide your doctor with a copy of your Advance Directive. Be sure that your local hospital follows the Federal Patient Self-Determination Act, which requires that all Medicare-participating facilities inquire about and provide information as well as education to patients on Advance Directives.

You may want to participate in and complete your documentation on the website for the annual National Healthcare Decisions Day. You can learn more about this collaborative effort of national, state, and community organizations at www.nhdd.org. If you have a serious illness, consider completing Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment at www.capolst.org, a medical order backed by a 2009 California law and recommended for patients with strong preferences about medical interventions that ensures your wishes are honored.

Have a plan and be sure that the medical care you receive is right for you!