



## ACTION GUIDE: NATIONAL HEALTHCARE DECISIONS DAY- SC HEALTHCARE DECISIONS Week (April 12 – 18)

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### **Background:**

Estimates indicate that less than 30% of the population has an advance directive, such as a healthcare power of attorney or living will, which guides decisions about healthcare if a person is unable to make his wishes known. In the absence of knowing a person's wishes, families and healthcare providers are frequently faced with making difficult decisions that may not reflect the desires of the individual.

Each year National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD) is recognized across the nation on **April 16**. Founded from one man's passion to increase the awareness of advance healthcare planning, NHDD continues to gain momentum every year.

**PURPOSE** To inspire, educate, and empower the public and healthcare professionals about the importance of advance care planning for healthcare decisions

**HOW?** State, national and local partners participate in a variety of activities to promote advance healthcare care planning in very creative and innovative ways.

The *SC Coalition for the Care of the Seriously Ill* (SC CSI) encourages organizations and individuals to celebrate the value of advance healthcare planning in your organization, community and across the state. This **Action Guide** provides a few suggestions to help you get started.

### **What You Can Do:**

- **Add your organization to the NHDD website.** Anyone hosting a NHDD community education event, large or small, can be listed as an official participant of National Healthcare Decisions Day. Sign up at <http://www.nhdd.org/join/>. From the list posted on NHDD, CSI will identify SC organizations so we can highlight them as also participating in our local South Carolina Healthcare Decisions Day.
- **Identify a point person to coordinate your activities** (medical staff, nursing, media relations/PR/Marketing, Community Outreach, chaplain, Ethics Committee representative, office manager).
- **Identify your friends.** Actively identify organizations and individuals you can collaborate with to make sure your work is effective and makes the most impact in your community and in the state.

- **Educate yourself.** Visit [www.NHDD.org](http://www.NHDD.org) to download the numerous tools, templates, and sample documents that are available to you. Resources are also available on the SC CSI website, including sample letters to the editor from SC physicians and healthcare leaders in prior years.
- **Collect personal and/or professional stories that exhibit the need for advance care planning and submit letters to the editor.** Please share a copy with us so we may amplify your message on a statewide basis.
- **Know how to help people get started with a conversation about advance healthcare planning.**  
For most people, it isn't easy to talk about how you want the end of your life to be, but it is one of the most important conversations you can have with a loved one. The Conversation Project <http://theconversationproject.org/> provides tools anyone can use to help start this discussion, either about what you want, or to help someone else get ready to talk.
- **Use the media.** Consider the best mechanisms to get the word out. Consider having local officials proclaim April 16 as Healthcare Decisions Day in your community. Create releases for use in the print media and encourage others to write op-ed and special articles for you.
- **Create opportunities for public education and awareness.** Provide speakers for civic groups, professional organizations and other groups. Work with local attorneys to schedule clinics where the public can execute documents.
- **Set up SCHDD exhibit tables.** Provide your staff and employees with information about the need for advance directives by having exhibit tables in committee meeting rooms, staff lounges, and break areas. Provide your customers/visitors with information by having exhibits in cafeteria, foyer, and registration area. Many templates are available at no charge on the NHDD website.
- **Distribute SCHDD information at health fairs and community events.**
- **Provide a link on your website to SC Healthcare Decisions Day.**
- **Links to available resources and tools:**
  - National Healthcare Decisions Day <http://www.nhdd.org/>
  - South Carolina Healthcare Decisions Day <http://www.scha.org/shared-decision-making>
  - Tools available on NHDD website (event poster templates, community outreach PowerPoint presentations, letters to the editor, stickers) <http://www.nhdd.org/tools/>
  - "Isn't it time we talk?" (brochure for the public about advance care planning developed by SCMA, SCHA, TCC, and the SC Bar) <http://www.scha.org/files/documents/Isn%27t%20It%20Time%20We%20Talked.pdf>

- FAQ on advance directives  
<http://www.scha.org/files/documents/advance%20directives%20FAQ.pdf>
- Advance Directives available in SC: <http://www.scha.org/shared-decision-making>
- SC CSI <https://www.scmmedical.org/content/csi>
- The Conversation Project (to start discussions with your loved ones about your end of life wishes) <http://theconversationproject.org/>
- **Maintain documentation of your activities for NHDD/SCHDD.** The [Federal Patient Self-Determination Act](#) requires that all Medicare-participating healthcare facilities inquire about and provide information to patients on advance directives; it also requires these facilities to provide community education on advance directives and be able to provide documentation of its community education efforts (see 42 C.F.R. § 489.102 <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2007-title42-vol4/pdf/CFR-2007-title42-vol4-sec489-102.pdf> ).

**For more information about NHDD/SCHDD, please contact:**

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***Charter Members of the SC Coalition for the Care of the Seriously Ill include:***

*SC Medical Association (SCMA), SC Hospital Association (SCHA), SC Nurses Association (SCNA), The Carolinas Center for Hospice and End of Life Care (TCC), SC Healthcare Ethics Network, SC Society of Chaplains, LifePoint, and SC AARP.*

***Additional participants include:***

*SC Bar, Lt. Governor's Office on Aging, SC DHEC Division of EMS and Trauma, SC Healthcare Association, Leading Age SC, SC Citizens Concerned for Life, SC DHEC, Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence, and various volunteers with expertise in specific areas such as law, social work, and policy.*