

## April Palliative Care e-News



### April 16<sup>th</sup> is National Health Care Decision Day.

**National Healthcare Decisions Day exists to inspire, educate & empower the public & providers about the importance of advance care planning. National Healthcare Decisions Day is an initiative to encourage patients to express their wishes regarding healthcare and for providers and facilities to respect those wishes, whatever they may be.**

Have you had this conversation? Do you have Advance Directives (living will/healthcare surrogate/Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care)?

These documents are not just for the old, the dying or hospice bound individuals. They are important for everyone over the age of 18. The three landmark cases (Quinlan, Cruzan, and Schiavo) were all under the age of 30. There is a National initiative, “The Conversation Project”, cofounded by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and Ellen Goodman, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist that has an excellent tool kit that can be downloaded from the internet to help in the preparation of advance care planning documents and to guide conversations with loved ones and providers. The toolkit can be downloaded at [www.theconversationproject.org](http://www.theconversationproject.org).

Veteran employees who complete these directives are encouraged to make a copy and bring it to your team Social Worker to be scanned into your medical record.

The advance care planning documents are what the Palliative Care Consult Team utilizes to help your loved ones to make the decisions that reflect the wishes you have stated in your directives. Filling the forms out properly is only a part of the process. Equally important is providing copies to your designated deciders (Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare) and other loved ones and letting them know where you keep the originals of these documents is necessary so that they can be accessed when they are needed.

If you have further questions, contact Charlie Antoni, Palliative Care Coordinator @ [charles.antoni@va.gov](mailto:charles.antoni@va.gov)

Online resources:

Project Grace ... <https://www.empathchoicesforcare.org/>

Five Wishes ... <https://www.agingwithdignity.org/forms/5wishes.pdf>

Florida Hospice & Palliative Care Association <http://www.floridahospices.org/hospice-palliative-care/advanced-directives/>