

National Healthcare Decisions Day

Media Frequently Asked Questions and Talking Points

Why is National Healthcare Decisions Day happening?

NHDD exists to “to inspire, educate and empower the public and providers about the importance of advance care planning.”

Why is NHDD targeted at the public *and* providers?

All adults should discuss and document their healthcare wishes in the event of a crisis. Accidents and acute illness can happen to anyone at any time, so it’s important to plan ahead.

It is well known that providers can do a better job of raising the topic of advance care planning and incorporating patient’s wishes into their delivery of care. Sometimes they simply just need the tools to get these conversations started.

NHDD offers a chance to address both these populations at the same time.

Why is NHDD on April 16?

It was inspired by Benjamin Franklin’s quip that “[I]n this world, nothing is certain but death and taxes.” So, do your taxes each year by the 15th and review your health care wishes each year on the 16th. We want to normalize reviewing this each year and recognize that wishes or the people in your life may change.

Is NHDD only about end-of-life decisions?

No. NHDD encourages all adults to discuss and document their wishes for *any* event in which they cannot speak for themselves.

Is it difficult to engage in advance care planning?

No. There are all sorts of free tools that are available to start and structure these conversations. There are free advance directive forms for every state and several other ways to document the discussion. These are all available at www.nhdd.org. Specifically, the short videos are an excellent way to start a conversation with those important in your life.

The hardest part is often just raising the topic, which is how NHDD can help. It creates a reason to “have a talk” and provides the tools to do it.

Do I need a lawyer to create an advance directive (living will, health care power of attorney, etc.)?

No. Free forms and information are available for every state at www.nhdd.org. Also, every hospital in the US is required to provide patients about advance directives, so you can always ask at your local hospital.

Are you doing this to encourage people not to seek aggressive care?

Absolutely not. We want to encourage people to discuss and document their wishes so that they get the *right* care for them. For some patients this may mean aggressive care and for others it means nothing more than managing pain.

How can people help?

First, lead by example. Do your own advance care planning. Then, let others know about it. For anyone who may make decisions on your behalf (a loved one, chosen family member or close friend, your health care provider), you want to be sure they know your wishes. For everyone else, it is good enough to say you've done it and let them know who your decision maker will be. Then, encourage all those contacts to do the same. NHDD is a grassroots initiative, and we can use all the help we can get to spread the word. You can share on Facebook (www.facebook.com/nationalhealthcaredecisionsday) or on X (formerly Twitter) @NHDD/#NHDD. Be creative.

Key messages and usable phrases:

- You can speak up and have a say in your care. Getting health care often involves choices that impact your life and wellbeing in different ways. Treatments only work if they work for you.
- Advance care planning puts you in the driver's seat.
- We can't plan for everything. But we can talk about what is most important – in our life, and in our health care – with those who matter most.
- Those who may have to speak on your behalf someday (your loved ones, close friend, chosen family member) can't act on your wishes unless they know what they are.
- It starts with a conversation. Talk about your values and experiences, what's important to you.
- Talking before a health crisis helps not only you have a say in your care, it helps better prepare those making decisions on your behalf.
- There are many tools to help open up values-based conversations with the people who care about you.
- Talk to the people who matter most about the care you want. The more you speak up, the better your health care can be.
- Tell your doctors what matters most to you. You can get the care that's right for you.
- For providers, the best way to support someone else in having these conversations is to make sure you have gone through these conversations yourself with those important in your life.
- Don't just focus on the document. It's about conversations.