

# Advance Care Planning

## HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE OF NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

### HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Advance Care Planning (ACP) involves discussing and documenting directives regarding health care and treatments, and selecting someone you trust to advocate for these goals and wishes. It's the gift of someone knowing your health care desires that may speak on your behalf, in case you can't.

Hospice and Palliative Care of Northeastern Illinois (HPNI) offers assistance to help people navigate the ACP process. One of the first steps is to create an Advance Directive (AD). HPNI guidance will be provided as to writing down what matters most concerning quality of life and desires about continuing or withdrawing medical treatments, and how to share this with family members. Your physician should be included in any discussions about treatment options.

#### TYPES OF ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

There are three types of Advance Directives. The first, a living will, informs doctors about the individual's wishes regarding the use of life-sustaining treatments in the event a patient can no longer make decisions. The second is appointing a Health Care Power of Attorney (HCPOA) – a trusted person (spouses or family members may not be the best choice) that will make health care decisions when the patient is not able. The difference between the living will and the health care power of attorney is that the living will expresses the patient's wishes but does not appoint an agent to carry out these wishes.

The third, *Five Wishes*, combines the elements of the living will with the appointment of the HCPOA in one document. This step-by-step

planning document focuses on communicating personal, emotional and spiritual needs, as well as medical wishes. It also provides an avenue for talking with family, friends and physicians about medical treatment in the case of serious illness. A critical component of completing the Advance Directives should be a discussion of care options for individuals with serious and/or life-limiting illness. Comfort care, also known as hospice, provides medical, physical, emotional and spiritual care for both the patient and family members. One of the most frequent comments heard from patients/families is, "I wish I had known about Hospice sooner. My mom's quality of life improved greatly with Hospice."

#### COMFORTING CARE

After the diagnosis of a life-limiting illness, patients and families can benefit from the focus on expert care, comfort, symptom management and quality of life offered through hospice care. Care will usually take place in the patient's home, but can also be provided in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or residential care facility. The patient's physician can continue to play an integral role while the patient is in receiving hospice services.

The hospice team, which works together to promote maximum comfort and independence for the patient and the family, can consist of:

- Physicians and registered nurses (for pain and symptom management);
- Licensed social workers (for counseling and emotional support);

- Chaplains and spiritual counselors;
- Integrative therapists (specializing in art, music and massage therapies);
- Certified nursing aides (hands-on, personal care and companionship)
- Grief counselors provide support after the loss of a loved one.

Choosing hospice care does not mean giving up hope; rather, it focuses on redefining life. Add Advance Care Planning to your New Year's resolutions and begin the conversation today.



#### A PLAN FOR LIFE

Since 2001, Bob Lee of Barrington, a 70-year-old cancer survivor, has ridden 9,754 miles on his bike throughout the U.S., raising money for cancer and ALS research, and to promote hospice awareness. In 2012, Bob plans to ride from Canada to Mexico along the west coast of the U.S. to help build awareness of advance care planning.

"Advance Care Planning is an important part of *life planning*, just as is financial planning," explained Bob, whose passion for hospice grew from the care and compassion his mother received while in hospice. "This is one of the phases we will all go through, and we can make it much easier for everyone if we express our wishes with family members while we can."

Bob acknowledges that people don't want to hear the words, *end-of-life care*. "This is an education process," Bob shared, "and we are not spending the time and energy to discuss our Advance Care Plans. While this is important for the patient, it is also very important for the family."

HPNI is a not-for-profit organization serving McHenry, Lake, Cook, Kane, DeKalb, DuPage, Boone, Kendall, Will and Winnebago counties. It is celebrating its 30th year of service. HPNI is Medicare-certified and accredited by the Joint Commission. HPNI offers: Home Health Care, Hospice Care, Pain Management, Grief Support, Pediatric Care, and Advance Care Planning, regardless of ability to pay. *Call us if:*

- You or a family member has been diagnosed with a serious or terminal illness and are no longer responding to medical treatment
- When a patient's desire is to move from a treatment plan focused on curing the disease to one focused on comfort and pain management
- You have lost a loved one and are finding it difficult to cope

#### Hospice and Palliative Care of Northeastern Illinois

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