

April 16 is National Advance Care Planning Day

Be part of the Speak Up Campaign . . . Help Continue the Conversation

Faith communities have supported the development of palliative care facilities and practices in our country. This commitment is evident in the central role they have played in the development of hospices and palliative care institutions involving health care professionals and volunteers from the worship communities.

Advance Care Planning has become a topic of conversation for more Canadians in the last few years. The aging population, new medical technologies and our diverse population have made this a topic whose time has come for serious consideration and discussion.

Intergenerational conversations about individual wishes during advance care planning can be a gift to individuals and their families. Advance Care Planning provides an opportunity to talk about protecting your rights, plan your choices and put your house in order while you have the capacity to do so.

Faith groups have an opportunity to provide leadership in encouraging a process for reflecting on faith beliefs and values when sharing their wishes with loved ones. The gift of knowing your values will be honored by designating a Substitute Decision Maker to make healthcare decisions for you in the event of a health crisis when you are not able to do so, is comforting.

We want you to know that over the last few years a number of provincial health care professionals have developed a website and many free resources for clergy and lay leaders including videos, provincial specific workbooks, guides, conversation starters, wallet cards and information about the different legal requirements for each province and territory. Our national interactive workbook at www.myspeakupplan.ca guides individuals and families through the advance care planning process.

The presentation material has been prepared for use in faith groups and April 16th is National Advance Care Planning Day. There are many ways that you can encourage your faith community to talk about advance care planning during this time. Some suggestions include:

- Give a sermon/homily on the topic – we have research and information on our website www.advancecareplanning.ca and would be happy to help you prepare relevant content.
- Have a health professional who is a member of your faith community present on the topic of advance care planning at a breakfast session or study group meeting.
- Post an article in your faith community newsletter, weekly order of service bulletin or on your website. We have sample text and key messages available in our ACP Day Toolkit.

- Bring in a speaker to present on advance care planning – a health care professional, a hospice/palliative care professional or perhaps a legal professional. We can help connect you with speakers in your area.

We thank you for your ongoing support for the Speak Up initiative in Canada and encourage you to continue your leadership in 2020 by encouraging some of the suggested initiatives with your faith groups. If you have any questions or require our support, please contact us at info@advancecareplanning.ca

Warmest regards,

Laurel Gillespie

Director, Advance Care Planning in Canada

The Advance Care Planning in Canada Initiative is under the sponsorship of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association