

April 16th is National Advance Care Planning Day
www.advancereplanning.ca has free resources to help Canadians plan ahead

(Ottawa, ON) – *Today is the day! A life well lived is a life well planned.*

April 16th is National Advance Care Planning Day, a day to promote conversations about your wishes and values for your future health care. While we are excited to share news surrounding ACP Day, we must first acknowledge the challenges that we are facing with the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

As the WHO-declared pandemic, COVID-19 progresses, this is a very concerning time for many people with serious conditions and palliative care needs, as well as their families, friends and communities. The situation is ever-changing, and we encourage everyone to pay attention to the public health experts that are directing our response here in Canada.

Sharon Baxter, Executive Director of Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association states, “This is a challenging time for everyone and those working in hospice palliative care are being stretched but have repeatedly risen to the occasion to provide good care for those approaching death and supporting their family and friends during this time of grief and bereavement. We will continue to advocate for universal access, and we will stand together to benefit all.” This mindset remains true for Advance Care Planning Day.

This year’s Advance Care Planning Day is based on the theme that a Life Well Lived is a Life Well Planned. Laurel Gillespie, Director of the initiative says, “Having an Advance Care Plan will help to ensure your values and wishes are respected should you be unable to express them yourself one day. Today is the Day! Between 6 and 8 pm, take the opportunity to speak with your loved ones about your values, wishes and what is important to you.”

Canadians have spoken, and although 80% of the population believes Advance Care Planning is important, less than 1 in 5 Canadians have an Advance Care Plan.

Talk to those around you. It’s not always easy; some need help to begin these difficult conversations. **The “Speak Up” initiative has a website (www.advancereplanning.ca) full of information, tools, and prompts to help with starting these conversations.** There are also links to resources for specific provinces and territories because the process of expressing values and wishes differs across the country.

New this year, we are hosting an online fireside chat. Join Yvonne Heath (Founder of the #IJustShowedUp movement) and Laurel Gillespie for a special virtual event at 4PM Eastern on April 16th. During this hour-long session, participants will learn about grief. Yvonne will share tips on how, even during physical distancing, we can Just Show Up for ourselves and each other. We are also excited to announce that Behind The Scenes, a short-form documentary focusing on the history of Advance Care Planning in Canada will begin airing this April. Hosted by Laurence Fishburne, the documentary will be broadcasted across Canada as well as the entirety of the United States. Another exciting project being released this year is a song called “Say”, written and performed by award winning Canadian artist Tara Shannon. The Pan Canadian National Framework, as well as the Legal and Public Toolkits have also been updated and re-released.

Don’t leave your loved ones in the space between guessing and knowing: have a conversation. A life well lived is a life well planned. You can share inspiring conversations and stories using the hashtags #ACPDAY2020, and #YourCareYourWishes.

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For more information about advance care planning, please contact: Laurel Gillespie at 1-800-668-2785 Ext 225, 819-318-0258 (mobile), or by email at: LGillespie@chpca.net

The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) is a member of the National Advance Care Planning Task Group, comprised of representatives from a number of organizations and professions across Canada.

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