

Advance Care Planning

When many of us think about “preparing for the future”, we think about documents, such as a will, which give directions for dividing our property and assets. Just as important, we should think about and talk with our loved ones about medical treatments we would or would not want if we were unable to communicate for ourselves.

Advance Care Planning (ACP) is an ongoing process of learning about the choices we each have for our future medical care. It helps identify our individual wishes and values, for others to honor, in situations where we cannot communicate for ourselves.

The Advance Care Planning process includes:

- Taking time to explore your thoughts and feelings about what is important to you to have a good quality of life
- Learning about medical treatment options and communicating your goals for treatment outcomes
- Discussing lifesaving or life-sustaining treatments, and how you feel about these options
- Choosing a Healthcare Proxy or Surrogate Decision Maker— someone who is very familiar with your preferences and will speak for you when you are unable
- Putting your wishes into writing

Regardless of your current health status, making sure that your loved ones and healthcare providers know about your wishes and values is the best way to make sure these choices are honored. The ongoing process of conversations and documentation of your wishes and values for medical care serve as both a gift and protection for you and your family.

Let your medical team know if you would like to discuss your values and goals for healthcare so that your medical team is aware of your care preferences.