

National Healthcare Decisions Day, April 16

This event occurs annually on April 16



"Don't ever let that happen to me!" For many years prior to their deaths, I vividly remember my parents emphatically saying this to me and my sister and brother whenever our mom and dad heard about someone who spent long periods of time on futile, aggressive life support before dying. I suspect most of us would never want "that to happen to me" or to those we love.

While not a perfect solution, a Health Care Directive (HCD) can help to assure that our choices at the end of life are honored. Advance Care Planning (ACP) can make a difference. Each of us has a right (and I'd argue, a responsibility) to make decisions and express our wishes about our health care options, including end-of-life care. And, we have a right to select a surrogate decision maker (agent) who can make health care decisions on our behalf when we're unable and/or unwilling to decide for ourselves.

In Minnesota what many still call a "living will" is now correctly and legally known as a "health care directive" (HCD), a written document which gives each of us the opportunity to select a health care "agent" (surrogate decision maker) or agents and to give instructions about the care that we want and/or don't want if we're seriously ill and incapacitated. Having an advance directive can be valuable for all adults, regardless of current age or health status. I believe that a HCD is a final gift of love for the people we love.

Each year since 2008, April 16 (or any day in April) has been designated as National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD). This initiative is a collaboration among national, state, community, and religious organizations committed to ensuring that all adults with decision-making capacity in the United States have the information and opportunity to communicate and document their healthcare priorities, values, beliefs, goals, and decisions.

If you are interested in using National Healthcare Decisions Day (or any day of the year!) as an opportunity to educate your community about making advance healthcare decisions and completing a Health Care Directive, the NHDD website has many resources available to assist you.

Please email or call the Rev. Edward J. Holland if you would like help in planning an event or would like additional information.

Find additional NHDD information (<https://theconversationproject.org/nhdd/>)

Find resources for faith communities (<https://theconversationproject.org/faith>)

Contact: Edward J. Holland

Phone: 952.237.4561

Email: ejholland49@comcast.net