



The Carolinas Center

Innovation and Excellence in Advanced Illness at End of Life

Introduction

The goal of Advanced Care Planning (ACP) is for you to live in a way that is meaningful to you for as long as you live.

The gift of advance care planning is making your wishes known to those who care about you through conversation and a written plan.

Conversations with those you love and trust are an important foundation for making decisions about your future health care. Your decisions should be based on your wishes, values, and beliefs. It does not mean, however, that they need to be made alone.

*Now is the time to talk.
That is how we care for each other.*

Additional Resources

In the Resources section of our website, you will find many helpful tools, including:

- *Isn't It Time We Talk* Family Guidebook
- *Isn't It Time We Talk* Brochure
- Advance Directives
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- Myths & Facts
- Comparison Charts of Advance Directives & Physician Orders

For More Information

The Carolinas Center
800.662.8859
www.cchospice.org

Isn't It Time We Talk?

Helping Families Plan Ahead
For Their Health Care

“The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.”

— JOHN F. KENNEDY

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS, JANUARY 1962

“I have an advance directive, not because I have a serious illness, but because I have a family.”

— IRA BYOCK, MD

What is Advance Care Planning?

Advance Care Planning involves a 4-step approach in making decisions about the care and treatment you want as your health changes and at the end of life:

— 1 —

Understanding possible future health care choices

— 2 —

Thinking about your choices in light of what is important to you

— 3 —

Talking about your decisions with loved ones, spiritual advisers, and your doctors

— 4 —

Putting your plans in writing by completing advance directives, so that they will be ready when needed

Think about a family member or close friend who has died. What is it about that experience that sticks out most in your mind? What would you want to be different for you and your loved ones?

Why is Advance Care Planning Important?

- Decisions like these are best made before there is a health crisis.
- Advance care planning is not a single conversation or a one-time signing of forms. Your plans may change as your situation changes. You can make additions or changes as the years go by.
- Having these conversations and putting your wishes into writing is a gift to those who love you. It gives them the permission and ability to give you the care that you want if you cannot speak for yourself.
- If you do not have a plan for care and treatment, neither your health care providers nor your family will know your wishes. This could result in uncertainty, disagreement, stress, anxiety, delay and regret among your loved ones.

Advance care planning is about giving your family the gift of conversation.



Dispelling Myths

“Only old people need an advance directive.” No matter what the state of your present health, a change such as an accident or a serious illness could occur. Preparing for such a change is important for everyone, no matter how old or young, or how sick or well they may be.

“My doctor, or my family, knows what I want.” You may be right, but it would take the burden off them if you had a specific conversation about your decisions. Then, follow up with a copy of your advance directives that puts what you want into writing. A combination of talking and documenting is the best plan!

“Advance Care Planning costs a lot of money.” Advance health care directives can be obtained free from health care providers or printed from websites (see www.cchospice.org/resources). You could pay an attorney to help you complete the forms, or get help from appropriately trained staff at your local physician’s office, hospital or hospice organization.

NOTE: *Isn't It Time We Talk?*, *A Family Guide to Health Care Decision Making* walks you through these 4 steps and provides worksheets to help you give your future health care as much thoughtful planning as you do other important decisions in your life. To preview a copy and for information about purchasing the guide, go to cchospice.org/resources.