

April 16, 2023

Dear Friends and Family,

I hope that this email finds you well. This month, I invite you to celebrate National Healthcare Decision Day (NHDD)! Each year, on April 16th, NHDD is supported by an organization called The Conversation Project, which works to ease the burden of end-of-life (EOL) care discussions. As an ICU nurse, I know that it is never too early to have these conversations, yet I have worked with too many families who do not know about their loved one's wishes as time becomes short. My hope is that we move past the stigmatization of end-of-life care discussions to ensure that we, and our loved ones, receive the care that they want and deserve. The forms and language can get confusing. For example, legal documents that allow a proxy to speak for someone else may be called a healthcare proxy *or* an advanced directive form.

To make this process easier, I am sharing resources to guide discussions on topics such as advanced directives, designating a healthcare proxy, or simply beginning a discussion about healthcare decisions. The Conversation Starter Kit is a good place to begin. There is even a Conversation Starter Guide for Caregivers of People with Alzheimer's or Forms of Dementia. Some of the links provided bring you to state specific resources for advanced directive documents such as health care proxy forms and living wills. You will be able to download an advanced directive that is specific to your state, fill it out, and share it with your family and providers!

I would also like to recommend some books for your book clubs, journal groups, or individual readings. They provide rich insights into the patient and caregiver experiences. They

include: *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande, *You Can Stop Humming Now* by Damiela Lamas, *Every Note Played* by Lisa Genova, *When Breath Becomes Air* by Paul Kalanithi and *A Beginner's Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death* by Dr. BJ Miller & Shoshana Berger.

Please know that although today is NHDD, we know that any day may require you and/or your family to make difficult decisions. I hope this information is helpful. Please feel free to forward this email to your family and friends. Reach out to me if you have any questions, would like more information, or simply want to talk about these issues.

Warmly, Kathy

Resources

Advanced Care Planning Explained:

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/advance-care-planning-healthcare-directives>

National Healthcare Decision Day Explained:

<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/NHDDCaseStatement.pdf>

The Conversation Project:

<https://theconversationproject.org/about/>

Your Conversation Starter Kit:

<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ConversationStarterGuide.pdf>

What Matters to Me Workbook

<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/WhatMattersToMeWorkbook.pdf>

Choosing a Healthcare Proxy

<https://theconversationproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/ConversationProject-ProxyKit-English.pdf>

State Specific Resources:

<https://theconversationproject.org/nhdd/advance-care-planning/>

<https://www.caringinfo.org/planning/advance-directives/>

Comprehensive NHDD Tool Kit

https://theconversationproject.org/new-communications-toolkit-for-promoting-nhdd/?utm_campaign=TCP%20Community%20Engagement%20Newsletter&utm_medium=email&hsmi=253338262&hsenc=p2ANqtz-9s4eOcwCAaGIITz5hlSUr1ZUfhpn6O4LTvdjpYueUjAdngCueFvr41Gm662or0Qq1UwMDGhDsZHu8FGgIzjFeRZiB2ZA&utm_content=253338260&utm_source=hs_email