



NEWS RELEASE

from Halton Healthcare Services

For Immediate Release

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National Advance Care Planning Day - April 16, 2012

Imagine, one day, without any warning, you find yourself in a hospital in a life-threatening situation, unable to communicate. Who would speak for you and make healthcare decisions on your behalf? Who would make decisions for you if you could not speak for yourself?

Halton Healthcare Services, (HHS) joins the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association and many other national and provincial organizations in encouraging Canadians to think and talk about their wishes for end-of-life care on *April 16th - National Advance Care Planning Day*. HHS has organized a number of initiatives which include a display on National Advance Care Planning in its cafeterias at Georgetown Hospital, Milton District Hospital and Oakville–Trafalgar Memorial Hospital and providing its healthcare professionals with access to a special webcast hosted through the Ontario Telemedicine Network on this important topic.

Advance care planning is a process of reflection and communication about personal care preferences in the event that you become incapable of consenting to, or refuse treatment, or other care. Your plan may include information about who you want to make decisions for you and how you want that person to make decisions. It may also include your wishes regarding such procedures as CPR and mechanical ventilation, as well as other personal information, such as spiritual care.

“Advance care planning is vital. It is something that none of us like to think about - but the more open we are about it, the easier it becomes. The key to advance care planning is not in the minute details about this treatment or that treatment but in choosing someone who knows you really well – someone who would make the same choices that you would make,” states Eoin Connolly, HHS Ethicist. “Often families will make decisions about what they would want for themselves in a similar situation or what they would want for the patient, but decisions must really be about what the patient would want. Families sometimes need to be reminded of this. Advance care planning makes this process so much easier for everyone; it allows for an open and honest conversation.”

As healthcare technologies and life saving interventions continue to improve and people live longer, advance care planning becomes increasingly important.

“National Advance Care Planning Day encourages people to speak up,” notes Mr. Connolly. “Don’t be afraid to discuss your thoughts and preferences with your family, and write them down so your own words can speak for you, even if you, yourself, cannot. This will enable your family members and caregivers to act in confidence on your behalf.”

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The website – www.advancecareplanning.ca - features a number of tools and resources to help Canadians make a plan and start the conversation with others.

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