

NEWS RELEASE

April 14, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 16th is National Advance Care Planning Day.

Make your wishes known.

Most of us instinctively put on our seatbelts when we get into a car. And we know it's a good idea to put on a helmet before getting on a bike. So why haven't the majority of Canadians also taken the precaution of planning for their future health care?

Only about half of Canadians have had a discussion with a family member or friend about what they would want or not want if they were ill and unable to communicate. This means that 50% of their families don't know their loved one's wishes – and may have some very difficult decisions to make.

Advance care planning is a process of reflection and communication, a time for you to reflect on your values and wishes, and to let others know your future health and personal care preferences in the event that you become incapable of consenting to or refusing treatment or other care. Advance care planning means having discussions with family and friends, especially your [Substitute Decision Maker](#) – the person who will speak for you when you cannot. It may also include writing down your wishes, and may even involve talking with healthcare providers and financial and legal professionals. You may never need your advance care plan – but if you do, you'll be glad that it's there and that you have had these conversations, to make sure that your voice is heard when you cannot speak for yourself.

Advance Care Planning is just another way that you care for yourself – and for those around you. When you do advance care planning, you give others the gift of knowing your future health care wishes, allowing them to speak confidently for you if you couldn't speak for yourself.

How to make your plan:

1. **THINK** about what's important to you
2. **LEARN** about different medical procedures and what they can or can't do
3. **DECIDE** on a substitute decision maker – someone who is willing and able to speak for you if you can't speak for yourself
4. **TALK** about your wishes with your loved ones
5. **RECORD** your wishes

Most of us hope to die peacefully, able to communicate with loved ones until the very end. It doesn't always happen that way. Making your wishes known now helps those who care about you make the right decisions if you can't speak for yourself. It's about conversations. It's about decisions. It's how we care for each other.

To learn more, visit: www.fraserhealth.ca/acp or call 1-877-TALK-034

