



## ADVANCE CARE PLANNING FOR FUTURE MEDICAL DECISIONS

### What is Advance Care Planning?

Advance care planning is a process by which people can think about their values about future healthcare choices; explore medical information that is relevant to their health concerns; communicate wishes and values to their loved ones, their agent/representative and their healthcare team, and record those choices.

### What is the role of a Representative or Agent?

The role is a very important one. You have been listed as an agent in their personal directive. If they did not complete a personal directive, you were listed as their representative in their advance care plan. You have been asked to carry out a friend or loved one's wishes about the medical care they receive if they cannot communicate for themselves. If a situation like this happened, you would be contacted by the healthcare providers who are caring for that individual. You would be asked to tell them about your friend or loved one's values and beliefs about their quality of life, goals of care and preferences for healthcare decisions.

The healthcare team would give you the medical information you need to know, and would tell you the benefits and risks of any medical procedures that are being considered. Your knowledge of the patient, along with the medical information, will help you and the healthcare team decide what to do. As a representative or agent you will not be responsible for any financial matters.

### What is "MyVoice"?

"MyVoice" is a workbook developed by the Calgary Health Region to guide people through the process of advance care planning. It gives people a chance to think about their values and beliefs as they relate to quality of life and end of life wishes. "MyVoice" will give you the information you need to help you understand what is important to your friend or loved one. This will help you be able to make decisions that will honour their wishes.

### What types of decisions will I be asked to make?

You may be asked to give consent to start or stop certain medical procedures. These procedures may include such things as diagnostic procedures (blood tests, x-rays, and assessments), medical procedures (surgery, CPR, intubation, and the use of artificial nutrition and hydration), and choosing or changing healthcare providers or location of care. If your friend or loved one dies, you may be asked to make decisions about organ and tissue donation.





## HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THIS ROLE?

You want to do the best you can for the person who asked you to do this. You can only understand what they would want you to do if you talk about it. It is very important that you speak with them before a crisis occurs. You need to know their values and beliefs about what it means to them to live well and to die well. You also need to know their thoughts and preferences regarding medical treatments.

You may have to make difficult decisions under stressful situations. Under certain circumstances, your friend or loved one may not want their life prolonged. You must be prepared for this.

You must also know that you will be able to act in agreement with their wishes. If you believe you will not be able to support their wishes, or if you do not agree with them and could not act on them, this role is not for you. It is best to be honest with your friend or loved one, and ask them to choose someone else.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

- Talk to your friend or loved one about their values and beliefs about what quality of life means to them. Find out how they would want to be cared for if they had a medical situation and could not speak for themselves.
- Make sure you understand their wishes and know what makes life meaningful to them.
- Ask for a copy of their completed "My Voice" workbook.
- Read the workbook and talk with them if you have any questions about what they have written.
- Keep talking about these issues. People's values and decisions may change over time. It is important that you have a current understanding of their values, beliefs and wishes for healthcare.
- Let them know how to reach you if your contact information changes.



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[www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/advancecareplanning](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/advancecareplanning)

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