



PATIENTCARELINK: A RESOURCE FOR ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

Taking the first steps to create an advance healthcare plan may seem daunting, but there are many resources close at hand to help you.

Advance healthcare planning – that is, ensuring that your wishes for how you want to be cared for in the event you become seriously ill are known and carried out – is currently the topic of a month-long national focus.



Last week, *Monday Report* detailed the two key elements of such an advance healthcare plan: choosing a **health care proxy** and outlining your wishes in a **personal directive**. Throughout April MHA is encouraging its staff, its business neighbors in Burlington, and its membership to begin the discussions with friends, family and providers about advance care planning and to fill out the relevant documents.

Health care proxies and personal directives are the first steps anyone – no matter what your health status currently is – can take to ensure you receive the care you want when you become ill. You can visit the [Healthcare Planning Throughout Your Life](#) page under the “For Patients & Families” tab at *Patient Care Link*. On this page, those who are seriously ill or are facing life-threatening diseases can also learn about other things worth considering:

- **Palliative care**, which can often help patients with serious, life-threatening diseases live better and even longer;
- **End-of-life care**, which is often defined by the medical community as care that occurs in the last months of a person’s life; and
- **Hospice care**, which provides an array of comfort and support services to patients and their loved ones when a serious illness is no longer responding to treatments focused on a cure

None of these topics are *easy* to talk about or consider but having a resource page where all the topics are laid out with links to organizations specializing in the specific areas may make the initial journey less difficult.

Equally important is *Patient Care Link’s* dedicated page to inform **caregivers** of the current thinking about serious illness care. *Patient Care Link’s* [Serious Illness Care](#) page contains some

recent best practices and reports on the issue.

John LoDico, Editor

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