

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

Part of living is knowing that we will all eventually die sometime in the future. While we hope the road of life is long it can sometimes present unexpected challenges. This is why conversations about key health care decisions are so very important, avoiding the need for our loved ones to try to guess what we would want in the event we are left unable to speak for ourselves.

An Advance Care Plan (ACP) is an opportunity for adults to share their beliefs, values, and wishes about their health care decisions with close family or friends, as well as with their health care provider.

Conversations about end-of-life can be difficult, so it may be helpful to look at an ACP as a way of focusing on what is meaningful to you. It is an opportunity to think about what is most important to you and to share it with your loved ones. We should all have an ACP, regardless of our age or health status, and as we grow and change with the events of our lives, so should our ACP.

Start the conversation with your loved ones and your health care provider by thinking about what treatments you would or would not accept if faced by a life-threatening illness or trauma. Communicate your wishes verbally, and also use the space in the documents provided to write them down. Choose someone you trust completely to be your Substitute Decision-Maker, someone you would want to speak on your behalf that would honour your wishes if you cannot speak for yourself.

Think of your ACP as a gift to your loved ones, helping them through a difficult time by taking the guessing out of your care and alleviating the possibility they will be left carrying the guilt or regret of uninformed decisions.

The Greater Trail Hospice Society provides free individual support to complete your ACP and is also available to make presentations to community groups about this important task. For more information, to pick up a printed copy of British Columbia's ACP "My Voice", or to make an appointment please call the **Hospice office at 250-364-6204**.

A copy of the BC Advanced Care Plan can be printed [here](#).

