

## What is advance care planning?

Advance care planning involves making choices about how you would like to be cared for, in the future, at a time when you are not able to speak for yourself. It may also include giving someone permission to act on your behalf to ensure that your wishes for care are carried out. This person would be your substitute decision-maker.

## What are the benefits of having an advance care plan?

The benefits include being able to make choices for your care that fit with your values and beliefs; being in charge of your care even at a time when you would not be able to speak for yourself; care providers have clear guidelines and instructions about your care and treatments; decreased stress for those who are close to you having to make decisions themselves about your care – with advance care planning it's your choice, your decision that counts.



Organization

*a member of*

**The Mississauga Halton Local  
Health Integrated Network**

This document includes guidelines designed to assist staff, patients/residents and their substitute decision-makers to explore advance care planning. It does not cover every option available in the applicable legislations. It is not meant to be legal advice. Some legal terminology in the statute has been described here in simpler words to make it easier to understand.

# Advance Care Planning

**A Quick Guide for Making Plans for  
Future Care**



**Funded by the Mississauga Halton Local  
Health Integrated Network**

*adapted from the Central-West Local Health  
Integrated Network Initiative*

## Do advance care plans need to be written down?

No, they do not need to be written. They can be communicated in any form, for example, verbally, audiotaped or videotaped. The plans that you do express while you are capable are legally binding.

## Are health care practitioners and substitute decision-makers required to follow your expressed wishes?

Yes. If you are no longer capable of making your own decisions, then health care practitioners and substitute decision-makers are required to follow your specified advance care plans.

## Can I make changes to my advance care plans?

Yes, as long as you remain capable, you can make changes at any time to your plans. People find it helpful to review their plans on a yearly basis, whenever the death of a loved one is experienced, when a major family change occurs such as divorce, when a person is diagnosed with a serious health condition, or whenever there is a significant decline or deterioration of an existing health condition.

## How do I make advance care plans?

First, think about your own values and beliefs and how these fit with health care decisions you would want to make for yourself. Arrange to have a discussion with your doctor or other health care practitioners to gather more information about care options if you feel this would be helpful. Talking with your faith leader and lawyer may also be of great help.

Second, discuss these important decisions with those people who you would like to make decisions on your behalf. Decide on and appoint a substitute decision-maker(s). Make sure that they are able and willing to act on your behalf if you are ever in a position where you are unable to speak for yourself.

Next, ensure that you communicate your care wishes and plans clearly through discussion, writing, audiotape or videotape, to your substitute decision-maker(s). Sharing these with your doctor, other health care practitioners, and anyone else in your support system can also be very useful.

## Do I have to make an advance care plan?

No, it is entirely your choice whether or not to make an advance care plan.

## When does an advance care choice come into effect?

Choices expressed through advance care planning will come into effect when a person is no longer capable of making a specific decision.

### Further Resources

**A Guide to Advance Care Planning**  
Government of Ontario

**Living Will**  
U of T Joint Centre for Bioethics  
[www.utoronto.ca/jcb](http://www.utoronto.ca/jcb)

**Let Me Decide**  
D.W. Molloy, 2004

**Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee**  
[www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca](http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca)

**Advocacy Centre for the Elderly**  
[www.advocacycentreelderly.org](http://www.advocacycentreelderly.org)

**Consent and Capacity Board**  
[www.ccboard.on.ca](http://www.ccboard.on.ca)

**Health Care Consent Act of Ontario**  
[www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_96h02\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_96h02_e.htm)