

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people of any age, who suffer from a serious health problem — which may include cancer; advanced heart, lung, kidney, or liver disease; dementia; and more.

The goal is to improve the quality of life for both the patient and the family, helping them cope with physical concerns like pain, as well as emotional, practical, and spiritual concerns. It helps patients better understand their health condition, choices for medical care, and navigate the complex health care system.

www.getpalliativecare.org
www.palliativedoctors.org

How Can I Be Sure that I Will Have My Say when It Matters Most?

Massachusetts Health Care Proxy

For everyone 18 years and older

A document that allows you to assign someone (a proxy) to make medical decisions for you if, at some future time, you are unable to make decisions for yourself.

www.massmed.org/proxy

Massachusetts MOLST (Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment)

For those with serious advanced illness at any age or the medically frail and very elderly (>80 years of age)

A medical order form from your provider for other health professionals that documents your preferences for treatments when you are very sick.

www.molst-ma.org

Where Can I Find More Information?

Massachusetts Medical Society
www.massmed.org/advancecareplanning

The Conversation Project
www.theconversationproject.org

National HealthCare Decisions Day
www.nhdd.org

Caring Connections
www.caringinfo.org

Caring Conversations
www.practicalbioethics.org/resources/caring-conversations

Put It In Writing — American Hospital Association
www.aha.org/advocacy-issues/initiatives/piiw/index.shtml

National Institute on Aging
www.nia.nih.gov/health/publication/advance-care-planning

Hospice and Palliative Care Federation of Massachusetts
www.hospicefed.org

Five Wishes — Aging with Dignity
www.agingwithdignity.org

Honoring Choices Massachusetts
www.honoringchoicesmass.com

For additional copies:

Massachusetts Medical Society
Department of Public Health and Education
860 Winter Street
Waltham, MA 02451
(800) 322-2303 • (781) 434-7373
dph@mms.org
©2014

This brochure may be duplicated for distribution without profit.

Planning Ahead:

What are your CHOICES?



Have **YOUR** say.

Brought to you by the Massachusetts Medical Society
and its Committee on Geriatric Medicine



**MASSACHUSETTS
MEDICAL SOCIETY**

Every physician matters, each patient counts.

What Matters Most To You?

Don't let the burden of important decisions in your life be left to your family when it's too late!



"I am healthy today but don't know about tomorrow... What matters most to me is **my family and making sure they know my preferences...** I talked to my family, then **completed my health care proxy form.**"

Medical care choices can be tough, especially when living with a serious illness or injury. Talk with your family and health care team about your **HOPES, FEARS,** and **GOALS** to help you plan well for end of life and make the best choices for **YOU!**

Wherever you are on your life's journey, your health care team is here for **YOU.**



"I have serious health problems that need multiple treatments to help me live longer and feel better... What matters most to me is **staying in control of my life and making sure my family gets help as well.** I talked to my loved ones, then **asked for the palliative care team,** which has helped us achieve our goals."



"I have difficulty getting around and have slowed down... What matters most to me is **staying at home and avoiding suffering at the end of my life...** I had the conversation and asked my doctor to **sign my MOLST form.**"

Start Your Conversation TODAY!

70% of Americans say they prefer to die at home!
— *Time/CNN Poll (2000)*

More than 50% end up dying in the hospital!
— *Centers for Disease Control (2005)*

Only 25% report having it in writing...
— *Associated Press (2010)*