



PRESS release



For Immediate Release
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End of Life Choices: Make Your Wishes Known

Panel Presentation and Discussion on this Topic Offered on Tuesday, April 26th in Santa Monica

Santa Monica, CA - The Terri Schiavo case should alert everyone of the importance of making your wishes known regarding end-of-life choices and decisions. Choices about end of life are important for all adults—not just for the older population. One sure way of avoiding this heartbreaking situation is the Advance Health Care Directive. Not only does an Advance Health Care Directive let your voice be heard about what you want, but it also relieves others of making these decisions for you and can prevent the type of situation we are seeing on the news today.

An Advance Health Care Directive is a document that instructs others about your care should you be unable to make decisions on your own.

The form designates someone who will be given the authority make health care decisions for you in case you are unable to make them for yourself. This is most typically a spouse, but can be another family member or a close friend or anyone else you feel will see that your wishes and expectations are met.

The form provides:

- Authority to make decisions regarding artificial nutrition and hydration and any other measures that prolong life—or not
- A clear statement of wishes about choices to prolong life or to withhold or withdraw treatment
- Request for relief from pain - even if doing so hastens death
- Instructions about organ donations
- Room to state additional wishes and directions

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Advance Health Care Directive forms are fairly easy to fill out, but the content can be quite complex and has to be thought through very carefully. Discussions with family members, legal, health or other appropriate professionals are highly encouraged before signing such a document. “Letting close family members and your primary care physician know about your directive can prevent future conflicts or even court action,” notes Dr. Monika White president/CEO of Center for Healthy Aging.

The directives can be revoked or replaced at any time as long as you are capable of making your own decisions. It is recommended that the form be reviewed every two years or so (or if your health status changes) and revised to ensure that it continues to accurately reflect your situation, values and preferences.

Advance Health Care Directive forms are available through state healthcare associations on-line or from community and senior services organizations, attorneys handling wills, estates, probate and Elderlaw matters and from hospitals or hospice programs. Geriatric care managers and many professional health and mental health care providers can also assist you in getting a form. Some book stores may carry them as well. A copy of the form can also be downloaded in Spanish and English at www.centerforhealthyaging.org.

A panel presentation and discussion on this topic, co-sponsored by Center for Healthy Aging, WISE Senior Services and City of Santa Monica Human Services Division, will be offered on Tuesday, April 26th, 4:00-5:30 p.m. at the Ken Edwards Center, 1527-4th Street, Room 104, in Santa Monica, CA. Panelists are Joseph E. Deering, Attorney at Law, Deering, , Estate Planning and Elder Care; Nicole Kaplan, VP, Programs & Services and Hospice Specialist, Center for Healthy Aging; Jane Gerber, Care Manager, Ombudsman Program, WISE Senior Services. Moderator is Dr. Monika White, President/CEO, Center for Healthy Aging.

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Center for Healthy Aging is a private, non-profit organization located in Santa Monica, CA, whose mission is to meet the needs of aging adults and their families. Founded in 1976, CHA has gained a national reputation for innovative and effective programs and services that assist clients and their families with the physical, emotional, financial challenges that come with aging through customized programs and services.
www.centerforhealthyaging.org