

Planning for the Future: Advance Care Planning and End of Life Care

The Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds supports an effort to ensure that member's personal wishes and preferences are known and respected when faced with an acute or terminal illness. Therefore, ETF requires that all health plans participating in the State of Wisconsin Group Health Insurance Program offer Advance Care Planning programs.



Why advance care?

Advance Care Planning involves learning about types of health related decisions that may need to be made, considering those decisions in advance, and letting others know your preferences. Advance care planning is important, even for those who do not need it immediately. Planning for the future can ensure your wishes are known and will be implemented if and when the time comes for decision making. This often includes putting your wishes into a written *advance directive*.

An *advance directive* is a legal document that goes into effect if and when you are incapacitated and unable to speak for yourself. These directives help others know what type of medical care you want, and allow you to express your values and desires related to end-of-life care.

A choice for comfort.

When faced with a terminal illness and/or toward the end of life, you may come to a point when you decide on comfort measures only. *Comfort care* is anything that can be done to soothe and relieve your suffering while staying in line with your wishes. Comfort care includes managing shortness of breath, offering ice chips for dry mouth, limiting medical testing, providing spiritual and emotional counseling, and giving medication to manage pain, anxiety, nausea, and/or constipation.

Hospice services.

Comfort care is often provided by *hospice*, which may be arranged in your home or at a hospice facility, skilled nursing facility or in a hospital. With hospice,

a team of healthcare providers work together to deliver the best possible quality of life in a patient's final days, weeks, or months. After death, the hospice team continues to offer support to the family.

If you are interested in more information or in discussing Advance Care Planning, the following resources are available:

- **ETF Website:** <https://etf.wi.gov/video/advance-care-planning>
- **Iowa:** hhs.iowa.gov:
<https://hhs.iowa.gov/media/10192>
- **Mercy Medical Center (Dubuque):** 563.589.9660
- **Hospice of Dubuque:** 563.582.1220 or
www.hospiceofdubuque.org
- **Upland Hills Hospice:** 608.930.7200 ext. 3350 or
www.uplandhillshealth.org/patient-visitors/honoring-choices-advance-directives/
- **Crossing Rivers Health Hospice:** 608.357.2262 or
www.crossingrivers.org
- **Grant County Hospice:** 608-723-6416 or
www.grantcountyhospice.com
- **Your primary care provider and/or local hospital**

For more information:

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