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As April comes to a close we reflect on the importance of this month for the work of the AC Care Alliance. It is a time when we place special emphasis on advance care planning in honor of National Healthcare Decisions Day.

Our Advanced Illness Care program is a holistic approach designed to walk alongside persons dealing with chronic, advanced and serious illnesses. Our 5 Cornerstone approach includes health, spiritual, social and caregiving needs, and embraces advance care planning as a key tenet to true personalized care for our participants. Having your voice heard is one of the most fundamental and humane ideals that we ascribe to in our work.

We believe that communicating and documenting your wishes and preferences is central to true whole-person care. With this in mind, we acknowledge the many individuals and organizations that are passionate about assuring all persons, 18 years and older, of all backgrounds can have their say!

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The Power of Making Your Wishes Known **National Healthcare Decisions Day**

**For most of us,
thinking about and talking about
the end of one's life is not comfortable.**

And yet, that's exactly what **National Healthcare Decisions Day** is all about.

Asking each one of us to step outside of our comfort zone and think about the unthinkable...a time in our life where we may not be able to speak for ourselves to let our doctors and loved ones know how we want to be cared for.

Who will make those decisions for us?
How will they know if they are making the decisions that we would have wanted?
What if those who love us most disagree on what the best treatment is for us?
How will they know what to do?

The answer is simple:

**Make Your Wishes Known.
Select a Healthcare Agent.
Complete an Advance
Directive.**

We don't need to have all the answers in order to complete an Advance Directive, but we do need to get started. We don't need to have all the answers in order to complete an Advance Directive, but we do need to get started. Start by thinking about what brings you joy? What makes life worth living? What happens if we are no longer able to engage in those things due to our health condition? Have conversations with friends, family, and your doctor. We can also start by selecting a health care agent (or two) to speak for us and carry out our wishes, when we are unable to speak for ourselves.

National Healthcare Decisions Day is an annual event that exists to inspire, educate, and empower all of us about the importance of advance care planning.

Get started today!

[Download the ACCA's Care Planning Workbook](#)

*Reach out today to learn more about our
Care Planning Workbook and our Advanced Illness Care Program.*

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Training Our Team on Advance Care Planning

Getting Comfortable With the Uncomfortable

The ACCA feels so strongly about empowering our participants in the Advance Care Planning (ACP) cornerstone that we dedicate significant time and support to ensure our Care Navigators are knowledgeable and confident in assisting their participants through the advance care planning process and completing an advance directive.

During the first three months of 2022, we focused our bi-monthly team training sessions on the topic of advance care planning. Trainings consisted of sharing of ideas and experiences, role playing, and defining the often-confusing terms associated with advance care planning. Our team members were encouraged to be open about their own thoughts and comfort level with this often uncomfortable topic.

"Learning about Advance Care Planning and Advance Directives has given me the courage to broach this subject in my personal life with my parents and family members." ~ Jae Williams

[Hear from two of our Care Navigators as they share their experience with advance care planning.](#)



Sharing Our Learnings With Clinical Providers

The ACCA recently had the opportunity to share some of our learnings with clinical team members from a local healthcare clinic around how to start the conversation about advance care planning with patients, with a special focus on their African American patients. The presentation allowed for a rich discussion and brought to light some of the challenges that healthcare providers experience with this important and often difficult conversation.

[Visit our website](#) to learn more about how the ACCA can work with clinicians and health organizations.

Bridging the gap.

