



MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release

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Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association and Ohio's Hospice Encourage Community Members to Make Health Decisions and End-of-Life Wishes Known on National Healthcare Decisions Day

DAYTON, Ohio — On National Healthcare Decisions Day, the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association and Ohio's Hospice are joining Decide to be Heard, a local initiative to facilitate discussions to help people complete advance directives, to encourage community members of any age or health status to have a conversation with their loved ones about end-of-life care and their personal healthcare wishes through advance care planning.

National Healthcare Decisions Day, which is celebrated annually on April 16, was created to start a conversation about advance care planning in the event that individuals could not speak for themselves due to a life-limiting health issue. According to a recent study published in Health Affairs, only one-third of Americans have completed an advance care directive to outline their end-of-life wishes.

It is vital that individuals discuss their end-of-life care wishes with their family members, especially during COVID-19. "Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced families to make difficult decisions for their loved ones without knowing their wishes," said Lisa Henderson, vice president of Health Initiatives at the Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association (GDAHA). "By having these conversations before a life-limiting circumstance occurs, you are helping yourself receive the care you want, as well as relieving your family from making complicated decisions on your behalf."

Ohio's Hospice launched Decide to be Heard as an initiative in 2015 to start a conversation in the community about plans for care at the end of life. **Decide to be Heard joined forces with a hospital-funded advanced care planning initiative and now operates through a partnership involving Kettering Health Care, Premier Health, Ohio's Hospice, and GDAHA.** These four entities, along with the University of Dayton and Wright State University, make up a community-based steering committee providing support and guidance for the initiative.

Decide to be Heard helps individuals throughout the community with advance care planning. They can learn how to document their future healthcare decisions and provide instructions for their medical care.

“We often find that if families have not done advance care planning, they are torn as they consider what is right for them and how to best honor the life of their loved one,” said Craig Schrolucke, sr. director of Mission Engagement & Communication at Ohio’s Hospice. “This does not need to happen. Decide to be Heard helps individuals have a voice in these discussions when they can no longer speak for themselves.”

Advance directives will help save loved ones from making difficult decisions about an individual’s care by clearly detailing their wishes. “Advance directives are simple and easy-to-complete,” said Lisa Henderson. “These forms can help you specify your wishes and generate frank discussions with family members, alleviating them of feeling guilt, stress, fear or potential long-lasting conflict.”

How to Get Started

Starting a conversation about end-of-life plans can be difficult, but it is an important step in ensuring individuals’ wishes are heard. Through Decide to be Heard, the community has access to both online resources for having end-of-life conversations and the opportunity to schedule a conversation with a trained facilitator. **These facilitated conversations will help people complete advance directives that are inclusive of personal values and beliefs and communicate documented values and beliefs with their family members, loved ones, and health care providers.**

Visit DecidetobeHeard.org to help approach a discussion about end-of-life wishes with loved ones.

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About Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association (GDAHA)



The Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association (GDAHA) is a member-service organization representing 29 hospitals and health systems in the Dayton region. GDAHA collaborates with its members to improve the delivery of healthcare services in Auglaize, Butler, Darke, Champaign, Clark, Greene, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, Shelby, and Warren Counties in West Central Ohio.

About Decide to be Heard



The Greater Dayton Advance Care Planning Initiative (GDACPI) consists of leadership from healthcare systems, clinical providers, higher education institutions, and legal professionals who are passionate about ensuring effective interactions around advance care planning with the people we serve. Guided by the professional expertise and personal commitment of our Leadership Council, we pledge to develop educational tools, community-led conversations, and trained facilitators to empower every person in the Greater Dayton Area to have conversations about advance care planning. These facilitated conversations will help people complete advance directives that are inclusive of personal values and beliefs and communicate documented values and beliefs with their family members, loved ones, and health care providers.

About Ohio's Hospice



[Ohio's Hospice](#) is a partnership of mission-driven, not-for-profit hospices in Ohio committed to a shared vision of strengthening and preserving community-based hospices. Members of Ohio's Hospice share the values of:

- ✓ Serving each patient in an atmosphere of hospitality, respect and caring
- ✓ Attending to the social, physical and spiritual needs of each person we are privileged to serve
- ✓ Preserving and enhancing patient dignity
- ✓ Celebrating the life of each individual we serve
- ✓ Reducing unnecessary suffering in the communities we serve

Affiliates of Ohio's Hospice include: Community Care Hospice, Ohio's Community Mercy Hospice, Ohio's Hospice at United Church Homes, Ohio's Hospice LifeCare, Ohio's Hospice Loving Care, Ohio's Hospice of Butler & Warren Counties, Ohio's Hospice of Central Ohio, Ohio's Hospice of Dayton, Ohio's Hospice of Fayette County and Ohio's Hospice of Miami County.

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