

IPRO  
**Healthy Insights**  
 INFORMED • ENGAGED • EMPOWERED

2017 ISSUE 3

HEALTH  
 INFORMATION  
 FOR NEW YORK  
 STATE RESIDENTS



Improving Healthcare  
 for the Common Good®

## Know your choices, share your wishes.

**W**hat would happen if you suddenly got very sick or had a serious accident? What if you could not make your own medical decisions? Would your family or loved ones be able to make the decisions that you would want them to make?

“It always seems too early, until it's too late.”



This April marks the tenth anniversary of National Healthcare Decisions Day, an annual event created to inspire all adults to think about the kind of care they would want to receive if they became ill. Its focus is on encouraging people to talk about their healthcare choices with loved ones.

### Here are five easy steps to help you make today your healthcare decisions day.

**1. Learn about Advance Care Planning.** Advance care planning is making decisions about the healthcare you would want to receive if you become unable to speak for yourself. These decisions are yours to make. They should be based on your personal values and should be communicated to your loved ones.

An advance directive is a document that goes into effect only if you cannot speak for yourself. In New York State there are two forms to use as advance directive documents. These documents can be completed without an attorney, though you may choose to have an attorney review them.

*IPRO Healthy Insights* is authored by Dr. Clare Bradley, IPRO's Senior Vice President/Chief Medical Officer, and a nationally recognized public health advocate.

Founded in 1984, IPRO is a New York based, national, not-for-profit organization. IPRO provides a range of healthcare improvement services that aim to improve the quality and value of healthcare provided to consumers across the country.

For more information about IPRO, please visit our website <http://ipro.org>.

*continued on next page*

continued from page 1

The **Healthcare Proxy Form** lets you name a healthcare agent - someone you trust to make healthcare decisions for you ONLY if you are not able to make decisions for yourself.

### Things to Remember When Naming a Healthcare Agent

Your healthcare agent must

- Be willing to act on your wishes;
- Be an adult, at least 18 years old;
- Be willing to talk with you about sensitive wishes;
- Be available to work with those providing your care to carry out your wishes; and
- Be able to handle possible conflicts between your family, close friends.

**A Living Will** gives you a way to document what types of treatment you would want, what you wouldn't want, and under which conditions each of your choices applies.

- 2. Remove barriers.** Talking about accidents or serious illness can be a hard thing to do, but there are tools to help. Think of advance care planning in the same way as you would think about creating a financial plan or writing a will.
- 3. Motivate yourself.** Host an advance care planning party with your family or friends, and watch a video that guides you in having a conversation (links available on [ConversationsChangeLives.org](http://ConversationsChangeLives.org)).

- 4. Complete your Healthcare Proxy and Living Will, and share your wishes with your family and healthcare providers.** Sharing your wishes will make it easier for your loved ones if they have to step in and make decisions for you. Keep your documents in a place where they can be easily found.

- 5. Review and update your documents once a year or when you have had a change in your health status.** Your annual wellness visit is a good time to talk with your physician about your wishes and what matters most to you. Remember to share any updated documents with your healthcare agent, your family and your healthcare team.

### What is MOLST?

If you or a loved one is living with a serious health condition (such as advanced progressive chronic illness or terminal illness) and want to avoid or receive specific types of life-sustaining treatment, speak with your physician about completing a Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST).

MOLST helps to ensure that your wishes are honored at the end of life. It is based on communication of patient wishes and documentation of those wishes on a bright pink medical order form. The MOLST is a form approved by the New York State Department of Health, and all healthcare providers in New York State must follow the MOLST. A MOLST form does not replace a Healthcare Proxy or Living Will. Unlike advance directives that express what you might want for the future, the MOLST reflects care that a patient who is very ill wants now, based on current medical conditions and health status.

## Make today your Healthcare Decisions Day.

For tools, resources and additional information on advance care planning please visit

**[ConversationsChangeLives.org](http://ConversationsChangeLives.org)**



**IPRO Healthy Insights**  
1979 Marcus Avenue  
Lake Success, NY 11042  
(516) 209-5262

Subscribe to receive this newsletter via e-mail.  
Visit our website: <http://ipro.org>  
or e-mail us at [healthyinsights@ipro.org](mailto:healthyinsights@ipro.org).