

Drop-In Feature for Diocesan Newspapers and/or Church Bulletins (246 words)

National Healthcare Decisions Day & Advance Care Planning: It Always Seems Too Early, Until It's Too Late

Advance care planning is making decisions about the kind of care you want to receive if you become unable to speak for yourself. By telling your loved ones and physicians about your wishes and recording those wishes through the appropriate documents, you can save your loved ones from having to guess what you want at the end of life.

National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD), observed annually on April 16, provides an opportunity for you to make certain that those who care for you know what kind of care you want if you become seriously ill. This year, the theme for NHDD is, "It Always Seems Too Early, Until It's Too Late," because illness is difficult to predict.

Illness can happen at any time, at any age, and it can leave you unable to make decisions about your care. Making health care plans for the future – even if you aren't sick now – helps to ensure that if a medical crisis does occur, you will receive the care you want in the setting you prefer.

Confronting one's own mortality is one of the greatest tests of faith. Because these decisions can be complicated, it is important to consider the teachings of your faith. Your local parish staff or team can provide you with support, hope and moral guidance in making these decisions.

Many tools and resources designed to assist you in making these decisions can be found at www.la-post.org. To learn more about NHDD, visit www.nhdd.org.