

For Immediate Release

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SAN DIEGO HOSPICE
and The Institute for Palliative Medicine

YOUR DECISIONS MATTER **SAN DIEGO HOSPICE ENCOURAGES YOU TO MAKE YOUR HEALTHCARE DECISIONS KNOWN**

SAN DIEGO, CA - Join San Diego Hospice and The Institute for Palliative Medicine, and Americans across the country, in making future healthcare decisions known to family, friends and healthcare providers, as National Healthcare Decisions Day is April 16. Now is a great time to share your wishes and complete your advance directive, because... **YOUR DECISIONS MATTER.**

What is an advance directive?

All adults can benefit from thinking about what their healthcare choices would be if they are unable to speak for themselves. These decisions can be written down in an advance directive so that others know what they are. Advance directives come in two main forms:

1. A "healthcare power of attorney" (or "proxy" or "agent" or "surrogate") documents the person you select to be your voice for your healthcare decisions if you cannot speak for yourself.
2. A "living will" documents what kinds of medical treatments you would or would not want at the end of life.

What is POLST – Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment?

POLST is a physician's order that outlines a plan of care reflecting the patient's wishes concerning care at life's end. The POLST form is voluntary and is intended to:

1. Help you and your health care professional discuss and develop plans to reflect your wishes, and
2. Assist physicians, nurses, health care facilities, and emergency personnel to honor your wishes for life-sustaining treatment.

San Diego Hospice and The Institute for Palliative Medicine believes in the importance of advocacy and awareness surrounding healthcare choices and encourages patients to express their wishes, and for providers and facilities to respect those wishes, whatever they may be.

Make your future healthcare decisions known today! Download an Advanced Directive Form online via the San Diego Hospice and The Institute for Palliative Medicine Web site at <http://www.sdhospice.org>. Click on Who We Are and Helpful Links, or obtain a form from your doctor. Learn more about advance directives and healthcare decision making by visiting the National Healthcare Decisions Day Web site at <http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org>.

In addition, San Diego Hospice and The Institute for Palliative Medicine offers a Speakers Bureau, with experts available to discuss issues surrounding hospice and palliative care and end-of-life care topics. To request a speaker, please contact San Diego Hospice at 619-688-1600 or visit <http://www.sdhospice.org>.

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