



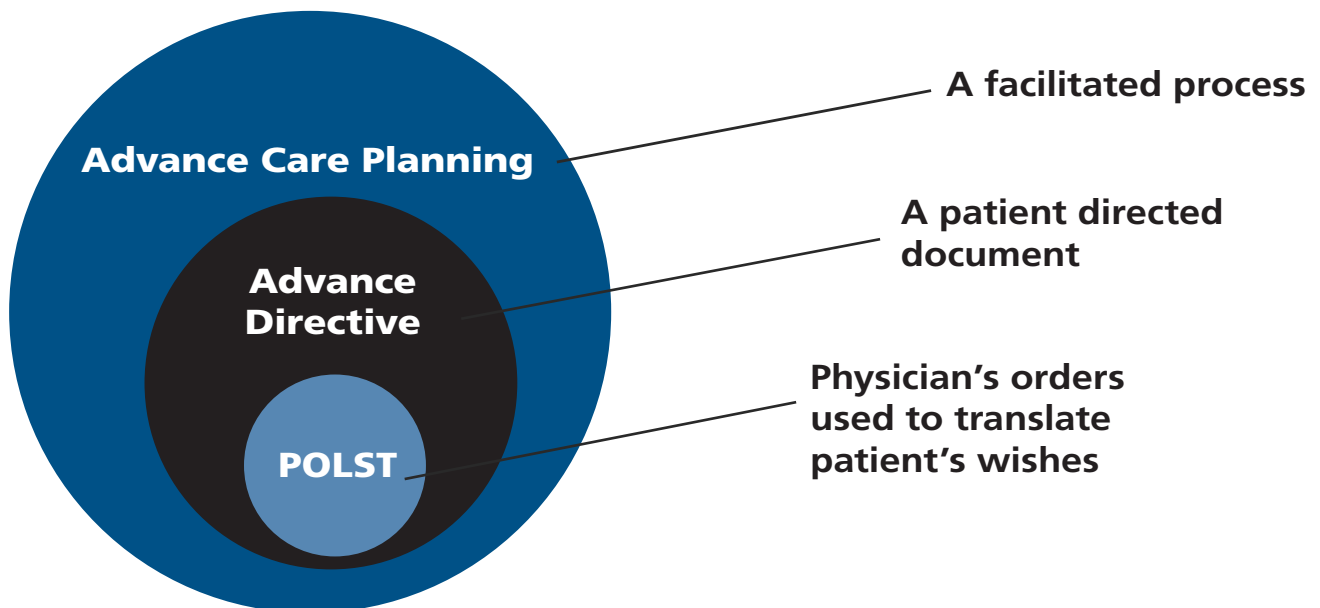
Honoring Choices MINNESOTA

A Metro-Wide Community Approach to Advance Care Planning

Over the past year and a half, East Metro Medical Society (EMMS) and West Metro Medical Society (WMMS) have been spearheading a metro-wide project focusing on a comprehensive and collaborative approach to advance care planning. Advance care planning is an ongoing process of helping patients understand their medical condition and potential future complications; understanding the options for future medical care as it relates to their medical condition; having a facilitated discussion with family, loved ones and providers; and reflecting upon these choices in light of personal goals, values and beliefs, to include religious and cultural perspectives.

It is important to understand the components that comprise the advance care planning process. As the picture below shows, advance care planning is a facilitated process resulting in an advance directive document, sometimes called a health care directive. That document can then be used to develop the Physicians Order for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form which translates the patient's wishes into physician's orders.

The EMMS Foundation is serving as the convener and coordinator of the Honoring Choices Minnesota initiative under the leadership of Kent Wilson, M.D., currently president of the EMMS Foundation Board of Directors. In late 2007, the outgoing president of the EMMS Foundation Board, Robert Moravec, M.D., suggested that the Foundation look into a program based at the Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation out of La Crosse, WI, called Respecting Choices®, which is a well-established advance care planning model with documented success both nationally and internationally. The Respecting Choices® program began in the mid-1990s with two otherwise competing health care organizations which agreed to work collaboratively on a community approach to advance care planning with the underlying principle to not compete. This model of community collaboration was intriguing and led to a site visit. Dr. Wilson visited Gundersen Lutheran Medical Foundation in La Crosse, and met the directors of Respecting Choices® Bud Hammes, Ph.D. and Linda Briggs, MS, MA, RN. It was clear after that visit and subsequent interactions with the faculty from Respecting



Choices® that their model of advance care planning could be implemented here in the Twin Cities and surrounding areas.

Respecting Choices® teaches that elements of a successful advance care planning program include community engagement, planning facilitation skills training, having systems in place to honor patients' wishes, and continuous quality improvement methodologies. Their model proposes five promises that participating organizations should adopt as they enter into a comprehensive approach to advance care planning. The organization agrees that:

1. We will initiate the conversation.
2. We will provide assistance with advance care planning.
3. We will make sure plans are clear.
4. We will maintain and retrieve plans.
5. We will appropriately follow plans.

Since the medical societies provide neutral ground for facilitating discussions between health care organizations, two events were hosted. In August of 2008, a meeting was held for members of the health care community who deal with advance care planning as part of their overall responsibilities. More than 40 attendees from various organizations came to learn about the Respecting Choices® model, and in the end, all expressed a desire to collaborate in the Twin Cities the same way that those in La Crosse had experienced when they embarked on this project. One of the more telling outcomes of the August meeting was that it was one thing to have the support of those who would be carrying out the work of advance care planning, but it was quite another to get the support from the most senior leaders. The following month, a luncheon meeting was held for senior leadership of area hospitals and health plans. Nearly every metro area hospital system was represented in addition to the major health plans. Attendees were again exposed to the idea of collaborating and coordinating around the process of advance care planning using the Respecting Choices® model as our guide. In the end, we received a unanimous commitment to:

- Not compete on advance care planning.
- Collaborate in the development of a community approach using shared materials and processes.
- Devote resources toward the effort.



Bud Hammes, Ph.D., explained the principles in designing an effective advance care planning program.

It was also suggested that we include ICSI in the process, which has since been accomplished.

An advisory committee was formed and first met in March, 2009. The committee includes staff from Allina Hospitals & Clinics, HealthEast Care System, HealthPartners/Regions Hospital, Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital, Fairview University Medical Center, Hennepin County Medical Center, Hospice Minnesota, ICSI, Medica, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of MN, UCare, Stratis Health, and the East Metro and West Metro Medical Societies. Both Park Nicollet and Allina are already working to implement the Respecting Choices® model in their respective organizations and have staff who are familiar with the process and have greatly assisted us in our efforts.

The advisory committee has provided the overall guidance for the project. Committee members have provided their wisdom and guidance in the development of one advance directive document that facilitators will use to document patient wishes and preferences as part of the overall advance care planning process. Several clinics and hospitals have been identified to serve as pilot sites for the Honoring Choices Minnesota program. Quality improvement measures have been agreed upon. The advisory committee has worked to effectively engage ICSI who is reviewing and updating their palliative care guidelines.

The next assignment for the committee is daunting but important to the overall success of the project. It is to work on the patient education materials which will be available to all hospitals, health plans, hospice organizations, nursing homes, community health groups, etc. The health care directive document and educational materials will also be translated into four languages, (Somali, Spanish, Russian and Hmong).

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The Respecting Choices® program has been extensively referenced in this article as this model provides organizations with the tools, expertise, resources and proven methodologies that can be used to implement an advance care planning program.

Honoring Choices Minnesota is the name that the medical societies and the advisory committee have chosen for our metro area advance care planning project. The Honoring Choices Minnesota program consists of training and education in the Respecting Choices® model with Minnesota developed documents and systems.

Educational Programs

A workshop to prepare institutional leaders to implement an effective advance care planning program was held July 14 and 15. Respecting Choices® faculty taught the workshop to 51 participants from 12 different organizations. It was very successful and attendees came away with a shared understanding of the steps needed to design this program within their own systems.

Four different groups will initiate pilot programs in early 2010. Those include: HealthEast, HealthPartners, HCMC and Fairview. In mid-September, the faculty from Respecting Choices® will return to the Twin Cities to check in with each pilot team and answer questions that may have arisen as they begin to build the infrastructure to effectively begin their pilots.

On November 2-4, 2009, another educational event will be held in the Twin Cities. The first day will consist of training and certification for facilitators. November 3 is the leadership day where teams will share their implementation plans for others to learn from. The last day, November 4, is solely for the instructor training (a “train the trainer” event). In early 2010 we may begin again with another workshop like the one we held in July.

Barriers/Opportunities

As with most things, there are some barriers and drawbacks that we need to be mindful of as we continue to work our way through this long-term project. Reimbursement for the facilitation process itself is vitally important for the sustainability of such a program. We are

committed to working collaboratively with ICSI and the health plans on this issue as we continue our progress. Another issue that we have identified is the process by which the health care directive document itself is placed in the patient’s medical record so that it is available when it is most needed. In La Crosse, where the program is working most effectively, the document has a prominent location in the patient’s electronic medical record. We would hope to achieve similar success in the metro and have had some preliminary discussion with EPIC and Minnesota Health Information Exchange (MN HIE).

EMMS and WMMS see this project as a model for future collaborative efforts among and between the health organizations and systems in the metro area with the medical societies. It is also viewed as an immense opportunity in the development of a community understanding of the importance of having patient’s wishes and preferences documented through a standardized process.

There will be much more to this project in the coming years. Stay tuned.

If you would like additional information please contact Sue Schettle, CEO of the East Metro Medical Society at (612) 362-3799; sschettle@metrodoctors.com; or Jack Davis, CEO of the West Metro Medical Society at (612) 623-2899; jdavis@metrodoctors.com. Visit our Web site at www.metrodoctors.com and click on the “Honoring Choices MN” tab. ♦

*Kent Wilson, M.D., President, East Metro Medical Society Foundation.
Sue Schettle, CEO, East Metro Medical Society.*



Fifty people from the Twin Cities and surrounding areas attended the workshop.