Caregiving is easier with planning and trusted decision-making.

VA Advance Care Planning

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) delivers support to caregivers and Veterans in planning for unexpected medical emergencies through advance care planning. VA encourages caregivers and Veterans to be proactive with documenting their health care wishes and deciding who will speak on their behalf if the caregiver or the Veteran becomes critically ill or injured. VA understands that this process can be difficult or uncomfortable, but we are here to help navigate those challenging conversations and decision-making paths.

VA Advance Directives

VA Advance directives are crucial documents for Veterans to ensure their medical and mental health care preferences are respected, even if they are unable to communicate them directly. These directives typically include two important components:

- **Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care**: This section enables Veterans to designate a trusted individual as their Health Care Agent. This person would be authorized to make medical decisions on their behalf if they become incapacitated and unable to communicate their wishes.

- **Living Will**: Here, Veterans can outline their treatment preferences and specify the medical interventions they do or do not want. This may include decisions regarding resuscitation, mechanical ventilation (use of a breathing machine), and the use of a feeding tube.

Advance Care Planning via Group Visits (ACP-GV) Program

The Advance Care Planning via Group Visits (ACP-GV) Program provides group settings at local VA facilities for caregivers to discuss advance care planning and learn from each other’s personal experiences. You can come on your own or bring someone from your personal support system. Veterans are welcome too. Contact your local ACP-GV Site Lead for current group offerings.
Benefits of VA Advance Care Planning:

- Allows you and the Veteran you care for to proactively improve quality of life
- Offers enhanced ability to support the Veteran you care for and be supported in a sudden medical crisis
- Promotes caregiver- and Veteran-centered care
- Reduces burden and eliminates uncertainty with medical decision-making
- Ensures you and the Veteran receive care consistent with your preferences
- Improves the bereavement experience of families and loved ones

More Information

For tips about starting the conversation and determining what matters most, read this handout

Learn more about the National ACP-GV by watching this video

Join your support group by contacting your ACP-GV Program site lead

Find your local CSP team for more information by using the locator tool