



## End of Life . . . Let's Talk

### **“Honoring your Choices...it’s about the conversation.”**

Talking about end of life issues is often very emotional, personal and downright uncomfortable. Fear of death, loss of control over circumstances and the thought that “something bad won’t happen to me” can be barriers to talking about this important subject. If we can make plans for vacations, weddings, parties, etc. we should also make plans to die.

The Twin Cities Medical Society and the Fairview Health System encourage families and community members to have discussions about these end-of life care choices. Fairview offers trained facilitators in many of their clinics, who introduce the idea of advance care planning to the patient, assist them with starting the conversation and then help them to complete a health care directive.

Some thoughts to consider:

- 50% of people are unable to participate in their own end of life treatment decisions.
- You have the right to know your health care choices and to decide which ones are best for you.
- Your voice should be heard in the care you want to receive.

Advance care planning is helpful in three ways:

- It makes us think about our values and goals regarding health care and what treatments we would want (or not want).
- It enables us to start/continue the conversation with loved ones and decide who might be the best choice for a health care agent who would speak for us if we are unable to, and would follow our wishes.
- Our thoughts and wishes for health care can be put in writing by completing a health care directive.

Honoring Choices is a program that addresses the subject of advance care planning. Centennial’s own Health and Wellness Committee will be hosting an Honoring Choices informational session in January 2014. Watch for details of a specific time and date. Come to learn and plan how you too can “die well” by having the conversation and sharing your thoughts on health care with loved ones.

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*Sources: Honoring Choices Minnesota, Fairview Health Services*