

Via email

April 16, 2014

Re: Advance Care Planning Day

Imagine the unthinkable. You have been severely injured, or are suddenly too ill to speak for yourself and cannot make your own health care decisions. Who will speak for you? How will you know your health care wishes are being met? Ensure your voice will be heard by having that conversation today. On April 16th, I am encouraging everyone to start the conversation. A conversation that could one day be the most important one you have ever had.

This is tough stuff, but often the toughest conversations are the most important. Advance care planning means talking with those closest to you, about what you want if you can no longer think or speak for yourself. You may even want to write down your wishes and consider including your doctor or lawyer. I hope that you will never be in a position that you will need that support, but it's better to be prepared and have comfort that your voice will be heard and your wishes honoured, especially in the most critical times.

According to research, patients' end-of-life care wishes are only noted in medical records 30% of the time. We can do better. We can talk to our family and doctors about what care we want in our final days. It's up to us to let our physicians know what matters to us.

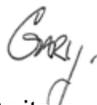
Starting these conversations is the hardest part. Tragedy knows no boundaries and illness favours no age, so it is important that all of us, at any age, start the conversation. To give you some ideas, start by thinking about your wishes on:

- Who you want to ask to be your legal substitute decision-maker, just in case you ever need one
- End-of-life care
- Hospice care
- Long-term care

For further information, check out resources such as: <http://www.advancecareplanning.ca/about-advance-care-planning.aspx>.

It's about conversations. It's about decisions. It's how we care for each other. On April 16th have the conversation.

Sincerely,



Gary Switzer
CEO, Erie St. Clair LHIN

GS:jf