



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **National Health Care Leaders Urge Everyone to ‘Be Prepared: Take Control’ in COVID-19 Crisis**

*- Coalition of patients’ rights advocates and health care professionals urges people to have “Hospital Go Bags”, designate personal medical decision makers, and talk to loved ones about what matters most -*

**SAN FRANCISCO, BEND, Ore., and BOSTON (April 14, 2020)** – A coalition of national and state health care leaders today launched a public health awareness campaign to inspire people to talk to their families about their health care wishes and to designate a medical decision maker. The coalition is led by the University of California, San Francisco-based [PREPARE for Your Care](#) program, which provides free online resources to help people make these plans.

“During this pandemic, many hospitalized people may not be able to speak for themselves, and sadly, family and friends cannot visit. Our frontline health care providers are desperate for any information about their patients’ medical wishes. One of the most time-consuming challenges health care workers are facing right now is finding their patients’ health care proxy,” said Rebecca Sudore, MD, FAAHPM, founder and director of PREPARE for Your Care, an easy-to-use website with video stories and free advance directives.

“People are pitching in and giving back in so many ways right now, and it is inspiring,” Dr. Sudore added. “Getting prepared for a possible hospital stay is another way to give back to our family, friends, communities and frontline medical providers. Everyone can do their part by choosing a medical decision maker, sharing their wishes and having a Hospital Go Bag ready.”

## **Be Prepared: Take Control—Three Things Everyone Can Do Now #PrepareforCare**

The Be Prepared: Take Control medical planning public health awareness campaign features an infographic and asks people to take three steps:

- **Have a Hospital Go Bag.** If someone has to go to the hospital right now for any reason, they should consider preparing a bag with essential items that will be crucial for the medical team to care for them. During this time, friends and families cannot visit the hospital and bring things that the person may have left at home, such as a phone, advance directive or their glasses. The Hospital Go Bag should include:
  - Written list of medications (or better yet, your pill bottles and/or inhaler boxes)
  - Written phone numbers for medical decision maker, vital contacts, cellphone password
  - Cellphone charger
  - A copy of your advance directive and/or other important health-care paperwork
  - Plans for pets or bills
  - Equipment:
    - Glasses, hearing aids, dentures, mobility devices
    - Phone, tablet and/or computer, and their chargers
    - Ear plugs, sleep mask, toothbrush, books or clothes from home
    - Bring food, water and medication needed for a long wait
  
- **Choose a Medical Decision Maker.** Select a person who will speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself. Also known as a health care proxy, this person can make sure doctors know about the care you want. If able, you should choose a back-up medical decision maker. If able, **fill out an advance directive or official form** naming your health care decision maker. Give one copy of the completed form to your decision maker (and a backup decision maker), and have one copy ready for your health care team. Keep this person’s phone number written down in your purse or wallet.
  
- **Share Wishes + Encourage Loved Ones to Prepare.** Think about what is most important in your life and for your medical care, and share this now with your family, friends and medical providers. You can share by phone, video call and/or a selfie video. Then, encourage your loved ones to prepare too: Ask them if they have a medical decision maker. Help them fill out an advance directive.




**COVID-19 & YOU** | **Be Prepared: Take Control**

- 1** Have a hospital 'Go bag' 
- 2** Choose a medical decision maker 
- 3** Share wishes + encourage loved ones to prepare 

To learn more and get tools that can help go to: [PREPAREforYourCare.org](https://PREPAREforYourCare.org) and [theconversationproject.org/covid19](https://theconversationproject.org/covid19)

**PREPARE™ For Your Care.org** | **the conversation project** #PrepareforCare #AdvanceCarePlanning @prepareforcare @convoproject

**EI COVID 19 Y USTED** | **Estén Preparados: Tomen Control**

- 1** Tenga un bolso listo para ir al hospital 
- 2** Elija una persona decisora para la toma de decisiones médicas 
- 3** Comparta sus deseos y anime a sus seres queridos a prepararse 

Para aprender más y obtener herramientas de utilidad vaya a: [PREPAREforYourCare.org](https://PREPAREforYourCare.org) y [the conversationproject.org/covid19](https://theconversationproject.org/covid19)  
#PreparesParaCuidado #LaPlanificaciónAnticipadadelaAtenciónMédica @prepareforcare @convoproject

**PREPARE™ For Your Care.org** | **the conversation project**

**EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:** These graphics available for downloading in [Dropbox here](#).

**VIDEOS OF DOCTORS NEHRING “[How to Pack a Hospital Go Bag](#)” AND MOSESON “[COVID-19 & You: How to Be Prepared and Take Control](#)” available [here](#).**

“We know the most important thing to do right now is stay home, practice social distancing and wash our hands—doing all we can to help prevent ourselves and others from getting sick,” said Kate DeBartolo, director of The Conversation Project (TCP), a leading public engagement initiative of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. “Picking your person and having these conversations early, before a medical crisis, is the other important thing you can do right now. From the safety of your own couch! Clarifying what matters most to you with those who matter most can be a tremendous help to your loved ones and clinicians. We’re all in this together.”

Best practices at [Providence](#), the nation’s third-largest health system, call for all employees and adult patients to have advanced directives on file. Providence recently released a [trusted decision maker](#)

[designation](#), allowing patients to name someone to speak in their stead, and is a step toward an official advance directive.

“Particularly this year, it’s not just personally prudent, but also socially responsible to have conversations with your family and your health-care team about your preferences for treatment in life-threatening situations. Don’t wait for a medical emergency to write your wishes down,” said Ira Byock, MD, founder and chief medical officer at Providence’s Institute for Human Caring. “These conversations and documents help ease the way for frontline providers.”

Join Dr. Byock and guests for a Facebook Live event, 12 p.m. (PST), April 16, for a timely [National Healthcare Decisions Day](#) discussion on how we can help the national pandemic effort by completing advance directives.

PREPARE for Your Care is a free step-by-step program with video stories and easy-to-read advance directives for all 50 states in English and Spanish. PREPARE also has COVID-19 Tip Sheets at [prepareforyourcare.org/covid-19](http://prepareforyourcare.org/covid-19).

The Conversation Project and Ariadne Labs also created a free COVID-19 discussion guide, “[Being Prepared in the Time of COVID-19](#),” including a tool on how to pick your proxy, available at [theconversationproject.org/covid19](http://theconversationproject.org/covid19).

## **Social Media Campaign & National Healthcare Decisions Day, April 16, 2020**

The Be Prepared: Take Control coalition is beginning a social media campaign on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#), and encourages everyone to share their own videos and photos supporting the three-step preparation. People who have completed the three steps (prepare your Hospital Go Bag, choose a decision maker, share your wishes) should **use the hashtags #PrepareForCare #AdvanceCarePlanning and @prepareforcare**.

The public health coalition includes the University of California, San Francisco-based PREPARE for Your Care program, The Conversation Project, Providence, Cambia Health Foundation, the Oregon Chapter of American College of Physicians, the Oregon Thoracic Society, the Oregon Society for Post-Acute and Long Term Care, and the Oregon Geriatrics Society. Two Oregon doctors are among those leading the effort: Jenni Neahring, a nephrologist and palliative care doctor working at St. Charles Hospital in Bend; and Erika Maria Moseson, MD, MA, a pulmonary critical care physician and President of the Oregon Thoracic Society.

[National Healthcare Decisions Day](#) (NHDD) is Thursday, April 16, 2020, and will further underscore the “Be Prepared: Take Control” message. NHDD was founded in 2008 to inspire, educate, and empower the public and providers about the importance of advance care planning. NHDD is an initiative to encourage patients to express their wishes regarding health care and for providers and facilities to respect those wishes, whatever they may be.

**About PREPARE for Your Care:** PREPARE for Your Care is an online resource that helps people learn about and prepare for medical decision making. This evidenced-based tool features video stories in English and Spanish, and guides users as they explore their wishes and learn how to discuss them with family, friends and medical providers. The website also offers PREPARE written pamphlets, as well as a toolkit to help put on a PREPARE Group Movie Event. These Movie Events can be used in group medical visits or in the community. PREPARE also offers easy-to-read, legally binding advance directives for all 50 states in English and Spanish. Check out PREPARE here: [www.prepareforyourcare.org](http://www.prepareforyourcare.org).

**About The Conversation Project:** The Conversation Project, co-founded by Pulitzer Prize winner Ellen Goodman in 2012, is a public engagement initiative of the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement](http://www.institute-for-healthcare-improvement.org) with a goal that is both simple and transformative: to have every person's wishes for end-of-life care expressed and respected. Information at [www.theconversationproject.org](http://www.theconversationproject.org).

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