

# United States Senate

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## **Bipartisan Senate-House Resolution Recognizes the Importance of Advance Healthcare Decision-Making**

***Encourages members of Congress and their  
constituents to complete written advance directives***

Washington DC – In an effort to encourage all Americans, at all stages of their life, to discuss important end-of-life medical decisions with their loved ones, U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) and U.S Representative Phil Gingrey (R-GA) today introduced a joint-resolution to recognize National Health Care Decisions Day.

“It’s not easy to talk to a family member or loved ones about what kind of medical care you’d want or not want at the end of your life. Yet everyday family members are making medical care decisions for seriously ill people who can’t speak for themselves,” said Senator Wyden. “Our hope is that in promoting National Health Care Decisions Day we can spare families from having to make these difficult decisions without the guidance from loved ones by encouraging them to talk about end-of-life issues and to fill out written advance directives.”

“From advance medical directives, to living wills, to financial planning, Americans need to know how to prepare themselves for the unthinkable - long term illness and death,” said Senator Enzi. “Health care decisions are never easy, particularly at the end of a loved one’s life. Still, we need to have a national dialogue on how to discuss and document critical end-of-life health care desires and beliefs. With this resolution we hope to raise the nation’s awareness and encourage families to prepare together in advance in order to spare undue hardships later on.”

“Advance directives help ensure that our medical care wishes are known, even if

illness or tragedy leaves us unable to express them,” said Congressman Gingrey. “By preparing an advance directive, we can ease the burden on family and friends who might otherwise be asked to make difficult healthcare decisions for us. By designating April 16th as National Health Care Decisions Day, we hope to encourage adults of all ages to take a moment to consider and discuss their medical care preferences with loved ones and then fill out their own written advance directive. These sorts of decisions are never easy, but by making a tough decision now, you can save your family from an even tougher one down the road.”

The bipartisan Senate-House Resolution supports the goals and ideals of National Health Care Decisions Day by encouraging health care, civic, educational, religious and other organizations to encourage individuals to use advance directives, while asking all Americans, including members of Congress to prepare advance directives for themselves. According to Nathan Kottkamp, Chair of the National Healthcare Decisions Day, fewer than 25% of all Americans have an advance directive.

At this year’s inaugural National Health Care Decisions Day – which will be held on April 16, 2008 – organizations will team up across the country to not only highlight the importance of advance healthcare decision-making, but to help individuals execute written advance directives in accordance with state laws.

These resources are available at [www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org](http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org).

The following national organizations have already committed to participating in this annual event by encouraging their members and chapters to engage in various education initiatives on National Health Care Decisions Day:

AARP

Ascension Health

Aging With Dignity

AGIS Network

American Academy of Nurse Practitioners

American Association for Homecare

American Association of Critical-Care Nurses

American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging

American Association of Medical Colleges

American Bar Association

American College of Physicians

American College of Healthcare Executives

Association for Healthcare Volunteer Resource Professionals

American Geriatrics Society

American Health Care Association

American Health Lawyers Association

American Hospital Association

American Medical Association

American Medical Directors Association

American Nurses Association

Association of Professional Chaplains

B'nai B'rith International  
Caring Advocates  
Catholic Health Association of the United States  
Center for Elder Justice and Policy at William Mitchell College of Law  
Center for Medicare Advocacy  
Center for Practical Bioethics  
Center for Social Gerontology  
Chinese American Coalition for Compassionate Care  
Donate Life America  
Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life  
Federation of American Hospitals  
Financial Planning Association  
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association  
Medical Library Association  
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys  
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)  
National Association of Jewish Chaplains  
National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Association on Directors of Nursing Administration in Long Term Care  
National Bar Association Healthcare Law Section  
National Center for Assisted Living  
National Family Caregivers Association  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization  
National Medical Association  
National POLST Paradigm Initiative Task Force  
National Right to Life  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Physician Hospitals of America  
Project GRACE  
Selected Independent Funeral Homes  
SAGE  
Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network (SWHPN)  
Society of Hospital Medicine  
Supportive Care Coalition  
NCCNHR: The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care  
The American College of Chest Physicians and The Chest Foundation  
The Division of Transplantation, Health Resources and Service Administration,  
US Department of Health and Human Services  
The Hastings Center  
The HealthCare Chaplaincy  
The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
The National Association of Catholic Chaplains  
United States Army Judge Advocate General's Corps

