

.....

For Details, Contact:
Josh Krysak
Coordinator
Community Relations

Uniontown Hospital
500 West Berkeley Street
Uniontown, PA 15401
Phone 724-430-8634
Fax 724-430-8631

Uniontown Hospital Media

Release

Hospital to participate in National Healthcare Decision Day



Have you considered what would happen if tragedy should strike and you could no longer convey your wishes? Does your family know what health care treatments you would and would not want if you could not speak? Have you even considered what those directives might be?

Uniontown Hospital will participate again in an annual campaign to try and help area residents consider their options, learn about things like advance directives and living wills, and plan for the future as part of activities associated with the eighth annual National Healthcare Decision Day (NHDD).

The annual observance, which is held every April 16, is a reminder to health care professionals, patients and their families to take the necessary steps to ensure your wishes in health care situations.

As this year's observance falls on a Saturday, members of the Uniontown Hospital social work department will be available from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Friday, April 15, in the main lobby at the hospital to help provide area residents with guidance, information and tools to talk about their wishes with family, friends and health care providers. Each participant will receive a free resource kit and samples of health care power of attorney and living wills in order to prepare their documents in accordance with Pennsylvania State Law.

“Uniontown Hospital is proud to again help support National Healthcare Decision Day,” said Denise Satanek, clinical director of the Intensive Care Unit at Uniontown Hospital. “Patients in Intensive Care, and their families, are often tasked with making difficult decisions about complex care. Our health care team is able to help guide them through those challenging decisions.”

**For Immediate
Release
April 7, 2016**

.....more.....

Diana Heneks, clinical director of Social Work at Uniontown Hospital, said she encourages residents to voice their wishes and take steps to ensure that their choices are known and protected through things like an advanced directive.

Advance directives are legal documents that inform health care providers who you desire to make medical decisions for you and what treatments you would want or not want, should you be unable to communicate your wishes in a medical emergency.

Advance directives do not go into effect until you are no longer able to communicate or to make decisions, Heneks said.

Uniontown Hospital Executive Director of Critical Care and Patient Flow, Sandy Thorpe, said that taking these simple measures can prevent families from making difficult decisions for patients who cannot make their own decisions.

“Putting wishes down on paper is a simple step that can keep loved ones from trying to best guess what a patient might want,” Thorpe said. “We will continue to support National Healthcare Decisions Day and encourage our community to take advantage of these resources.”

Advance directives come in two main forms:

- A *health care power of attorney* (or *proxy* or *agent* or *surrogate*) documents the person you select to be your voice for your health care decisions if you cannot speak for yourself.
- A *living will* documents what kinds of medical treatments you would or would not want at the end of life.

Director of Health Information Management at the hospital, Karen Keniston, said that advance directives can be electronically scanned and added immediately to a patient’s medical record prior to admission.

“If a patient wants to be sure that the advance directive is part of their medical record, whether they have ever been a patient here before or not, they can bring them to the medical records office, located in the main lobby of the hospital. We then ask them to fill out a very short form so we know who they are, and scan their document accordingly. Advance

more

directives will be followed by all caregivers if the patient is admitted or seen in the emergency department.”

Also, patients may make arrangements to complete a short form and mail a copy of their advance directive for scanning purposes. For more information, contact Health Information Management at 724-430-5713.

For more information about National Healthcare Decision Day, please visit www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org.