Hi {FIRST_NAME|Friend},

If you were ill or seriously injured and couldn't speak for yourself, would your loved ones know the kind of medical care you want? A new two-year program at The Next Door, funded by the Columbia Gorge Health Council, is tackling this emotionally difficult topic.

Completing an Advance Directive, a legal document in which a person identifies a medical representative and states what kind of medical care they want to receive if they cannot speak for themselves, is not the cultural norm. Only about 37% of adults in the U.S. have one. While completing an Advance Directive is especially important for those over age 50, our campaign will urge everyone 18 and older to complete one.

But it's difficult to talk about, or even think about, isn't it? Most of us don't want to imagine ourselves in a situation where we're sick or hurt and can't speak for ourselves, the possibility of being a burden on our families, or even our loved ones having to live without us. However,
Where to find an Advance Directive form:

- Your doctor’s office
- Or visit www.caringinfo.org, enter the state in which you live, and print one

Who to contact for more info on The Next Door’s Advance Directive project:

- Lorena Sprager
- lorenas@nextdoorinc.org
- 541-399-4561

completing an Advance Directive when we’re healthy removes the stress from our families, giving them written documentation of our wishes that they can then carry out. Think of it as a gift you can give the ones you care about.

Much of our work at The Next Door centers around families, so taking on this Advance Directives project has really broadened our reach and given us the ability to discuss this important but difficult topic with young families, many of whom have never considered completing such a document. Unlike other Advance Directives projects, ours is community-based, meaning our Community Health Workers and other staff are meeting community members where they are (physically) to have these very real conversations.

During the months of May and June, our staff completed three listening sessions, in both English and Spanish, about Advance Directives with community members in Hood River and Wasco Counties. The powerful conversations that emerged from these diverse groups were varied, but there was one common thread: people expressed a genuine desire to come together to talk about Advance Directives, get comfortable with the topic, and even gather with others to complete their own.

Our next step is to analyze the data gathered at the listening sessions to create messages and strategies for the community outreach campaign. Through the use of key messages delivered via radio public service announcements, radionovelas, flyers, newspaper articles, Community Health Workers and other community leaders, and more, the goal of the project is to reach 800 people face-to-face, as well as thousands through radio and other media, to discuss the importance of completing an Advance Directive.

Give yourself and your loved ones peace of mind and complete your Advance Directive today.

Sincerely,
Janet L. Hamada, MSW
Executive Director
Read the VerticalResponse marketing policy.