



## **April 16 is National Healthcare Decisions Day – Are You Prepared?**

**White Plains, NY – (April 1, 2010)** – National Healthcare Decisions Day will be commemorated on April 16, 2010, during which all Americans are encouraged to make their healthcare wishes known to their loved ones and medical advisors.

Advance care planning provides individuals with the resources they need in order to document their choices when facing a life-limiting illness. Such choices include what kind of treatment is preferred; who is designated as a decision maker for the individual's care; and what treatments are *not* acceptable.

“Advance care planning helps preserve patient dignity and save families the turmoil of having to make difficult decisions,” said Kate Colburn, Executive Director of Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester. “It is about respecting patients’ wishes.”

Americans are encouraged to communicate their end-of-life care choices through such documents as a healthcare proxy or a living will. A healthcare proxy enables individuals to choose a trusted friend or family member to make important healthcare decisions on their behalf if they are unable to do so. A living will includes information about an individual's preferred medical care.

For additional information on advance care planning, visit <http://www.caringinfo.org/PlanningAhead>. For state-specific advance directives, visit <http://www.caringinfo.org/stateadownload>.

Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester is located at 311 North Street, Suite 204, White Plains, NY. For additional information, visit [www.hospiceofwestchester.com](http://www.hospiceofwestchester.com) or call 914.682.1484.

**About Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester:** Hospice & Palliative Care of Westchester is a private, not-for-profit healthcare agency that provides skilled, compassionate and comprehensive end-of-life home care to patients with any diagnosis and gives support to their families and loved ones.

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