

Dear NHDD Friend,

As you already know, April 16, 2010 will be the Third Annual National Healthcare Decisions Day. This nationwide event exists to encourage all people to engage in thoughtful advance healthcare planning, and to encourage healthcare providers to honor those decisions.

As you certainly also know, issues of death, dying, and illness are often substantially influenced by faith. And, these events often significantly influence people's faith going forward. In numerous surveys, Americans have voiced their belief in the importance of spirituality as they confront advanced illness and acknowledge the important role that congregations can play.

For these reasons, we hope you will join us and numerous others around the country in honoring and participating in [National Healthcare Decisions Day](#). Among other things, NHDD organizers encourage faith communities to incorporate discussions of severe illness, death and lament in sermons and educational programs in or around the time of April 16<sup>th</sup>.

To assist you in your efforts, we want to make you aware of important resources for faith communities to address the topics of advance healthcare planning, death and dying.

*[The Unbroken Circle: A Toolkit for Congregations Around Illness, End of Life, and Grief](#)* is an interfaith resource filled with practical tools and guidance to help congregations care for people facing illness, dying and bereavement. Developed by the Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life and written by Rev. James L. Brooks, it provides clergy, lay leaders, parish nurses and chaplains with an inspiring vision, easy-to-use tools, specific tips, and hundreds of additional resources. Information on the toolkit is available at [www.iceol.duke.edu](http://www.iceol.duke.edu), along with companion resources for specific faith and cultural traditions.

*Compassion Sabbath* is an interfaith initiative that began in Greater Kansas City, but subsequently has been replicated and/or adapted for implementation in communities spanning two dozen states. It was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and is designed to engage clergy and other faith leaders to proactively meet the needs of the seriously ill and dying, and their families. Free tools and resources, including a toolkit for preaching and worship in many faith traditions and a *Caring Conversations* workbook that includes advance directive forms, are available at [www.practicalbioethics.org](http://www.practicalbioethics.org).

We encourage you to direct others to resources such as [www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org](http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org), where free advance directives for all 50 states are available. To remain up to date on NHDD resources and activities, please confirm your participation by clicking [here](#).

We hope that these resources will be of great benefit to you. We similarly hope that National Healthcare Decisions Day may be used as a day for you and others to deepen the connection between spirituality, faith and health.

Sincerely,  
Richard Payne  
Esther Colliflower Director  
Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life

Myra Christopher  
President and CEO  
Center for Practical Bioethics

Nathan Kottkamp  
Chair, National Healthcare Decisions Day  
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[www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org](http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org), Join us by clicking [here](#).