

## **Letter: Lead by example and share your wishes**

**By PATRICIA BOMBA**

**Messenger Post**

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MPNnow.com — If sudden illness prevented you from making your own medical decisions, would your loved ones feel comfortable making decisions about your care?

April 16 was National Healthcare Decisions Day, a day on which people are encouraged to:

- Discuss their values and preferences for health care with loved ones.
- Select a spokesperson and complete a Health Care Proxy form. Provide copies to loved ones, your physician and attorney. You can also upload your proxy form to the Rochester Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO) site at [www.grrhio.org](http://www.grrhio.org).
- Become aware of the Family Health Care Decisions Act, which expands the authority of family members and others close to the patient, but does not eliminate the need for open and honest conversations with loved ones about your wishes and desires for medical care.
- Learn about the Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) program for seriously ill patients, which defines treatment preferences based on a patient's goals for care and follows a patient through the health care system — facility to facility, physician to physician.

For their part, physicians and nurse practitioners are urged to get familiar with New York state's new Palliative Care Information Act, which requires them to offer terminally ill patients information and counseling concerning palliative care and end-of-life options.

All the details are free online at [www.CompassionAndSupport.org](http://www.CompassionAndSupport.org).

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