

The Lifetime Healthcare Companies

2006 Employee Health Care Decisions Survey Results

A Report on Overall Employee Knowledge, Motivation,
Behavioral Readiness and Self-reported Completion Rates
Regarding Health Care Proxies and Living Wills

September 24, 2006

Dr. Patricia Bomba
Vice President & Medical Director, Geriatrics

Emily Martinez-Vogt
Program Implementation Manager

Kathleen Richardson
Summer College Intern

Executive Summary

Advance Care Planning (ACP) is a process of planning for future medical care in the event you are unable to make your own decisions. The process results in completion of Advance Directives (AD), both a Health Care Proxy and Living Will.

The 2006 Employee Health Care Decisions Survey was sent to 4,111 Excellus Health Plan, Excellus Benefit Services and MedAmerica employees on July 26, 2006. 4097 received this survey electronically and 14 received paper copies. The 23 question survey focused on employee knowledge, motivation, behavioral readiness and self-reported completion rates regarding Health Care Proxies and Living Wills. An impressive overall response rate of 52% (2,133 returns) represents a 17% increase from 2002 when a 6 question survey was distributed to employees to assess completion rates of Health Care Proxies (HCP) and Living Wills (LW) and employee interest in receiving more information.

Quantitative and qualitative survey results were collected and analyzed. Self-reported completion rates of Health Care Proxies and Living Wills from the 2006 survey were compared to similar results from the 2002 survey. 33.5% of employees have completed a Health Care Proxy, up from 30% in 2002. While this is not a statistically significant change, the 2006 results reveal 33.4% of employees are ready to complete their documents and 30% have identified barriers that need to be addressed. With regards to Living Wills, there was no significant difference in completion rates with 18% in 2002 and 17% in 2006.

The 2006 Employee Health Care Decisions Survey results will be used to establish standardized metrics to track advance directives completion rates among employees. Trend data will be obtained through serial surveys. Both the quantitative and qualitative survey results will provide useful information that will help us establish programs in 2007 to benefit our employees as well as to create a model to better serve our customers and communities.

Furthermore, the data provides the corporation a foundation to guide future educational programs and initiatives to develop employees who become ambassadors for Advance Directives through personal action and act as educators who initiate conversation pertaining to Advance Directives.

Background

Advance Care Planning (ACP) is a process of planning for future medical care in the event you are unable to make your own decisions. The process results in completion of Advance Directives (AD), specifically, a Health Care Proxy and Living Will. Advance Directives are helpful during an unexpected illness from which you expect to recover, and are critically important at the end of life. Benefits of ACP include providing peace of mind that health care wishes will always be honored and avoiding confusion and conflict over health care decisions at a time of crisis.

In January 2002, The Lifetime Healthcare Companies conducted a 6 question employee survey to assess completion rates of Health Care Proxies (HCP) and Living Wills (LW) and employee interest in receiving more information. Employees in five regions of upstate New York State were surveyed. Most people were able to respond electronically (which typically improves response rates) or with paper copies; however one region only had access to hard copies of the survey. A total of 6,537 employees were surveyed, and the response rate was 35% (2,272 responses). Results of the 2002 survey indicate that 77% of respondents knew what an advance care directive was. Approximately 30% of respondents had appointed a health care proxy at that time; 18% of respondents had completed a living will. Both the rates of health care proxy completion, and living will creation varied directly with age.

Since 2002, The Lifetime Healthcare Companies is actively promoting the completion of advance directives such as health care proxies, living wills and Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatments (MOLST), a medical order form that outlines treatment preferences for people with serious health condition. This is in keeping with our mission to continually improve the health and health care of the people we serve, including our own employees. Activities include creation and distribution of an Advance Care Planning booklet and promotion of Community Conversations on Compassionate Care, an interactive community workshop on Advance Care Planning and training of facilitators for the workshop and 1 on 1 facilitated conversation on Advance Care Planning.

Objectives and Methodology

Purpose

The 2006 Employee Health Care Decisions Survey is designed to assess employees' knowledge, motivation, behavioral readiness and self-reported completion rates regarding a Health Care Proxy and Living Will. Self-reported completion rates of Health Care Proxies and Living Wills from the 2006 survey will be compared to similar results from the 2002 survey.

Short-Term Goals

Results will be used to establish standardized metrics to track advance directives completion rates among employees. Trend data will be obtained through serial surveys. Both the quantitative and qualitative survey results will provide useful information that will help establish Wellness through End-of-life Initiative programs in 2007 to benefit our employees. The feasibility of replicating the Health Care Decisions Survey for Excellus members will be explored.

Increasing employee AD completion rates by at least 5% will be a primary goal after the Wellness through End-of-life Initiative program is launched.

Long-Term Goals

The long-term goal is to create a model for educating employees on Advance Care Planning to better serve our customers and communities.

The Lifetime Healthcare Companies is actively promoting the completion of advance directives including health care proxies and living wills. Survey results can be used to refine community interventions as well. Improvement in community metrics for AD completion will also be assessed.

Method

The 2006 Employee Health Care Decisions Survey was developed to assess employee completion rates of advance directives while integrating corporate knowledge gained through community work on advance care planning.

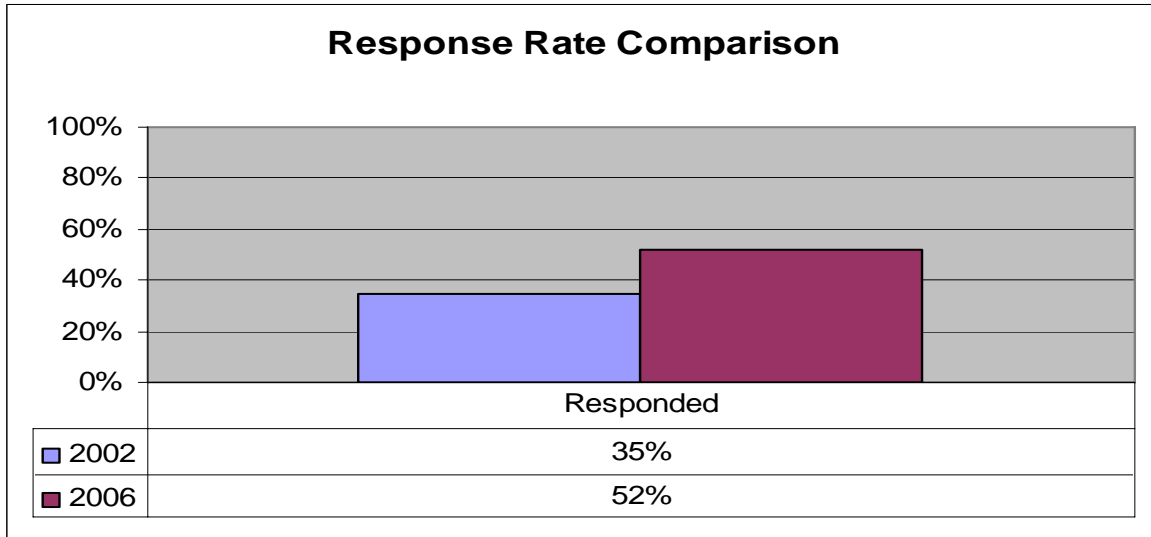
To avoid introduction of potential bias, the 2006 survey asked the same questions as the first survey in terms of self-reported completion rates of Health Care Proxies and Living Wills. Questions were added to assess the employees' knowledge of advance directives and resources used to access health information. For those who have already completed an advance directive, additional new questions focused on the timing, distribution, accessibility and contributing factors motivating completion of the health care proxy and living will. For those who have not completed an advance directive, questions focused on barriers and behavioral readiness to complete a health care proxy and living will.

On July 26, 2006, the Employee Health Care Decisions Survey was launched electronically. The survey was distributed by e-mail to Excellus Health Plan, MedAmerica and EBS employees, as well as to the summer college interns, totaling 4097 people. Respondents were asked to respond electronically. Fourteen Excellus Health Plan employees received a paper copy of the survey, which were later collected. A total of 4,111 employees received the survey. Essentially, the survey was done almost entirely via the internet. The survey was distributed by e-mail through the President/CEO's address. It was expected that sending the survey from the Chief Executive Officer would increase the survey response rate. Within the first week of the survey opening, the response rate had already reached 35%.

Key Findings

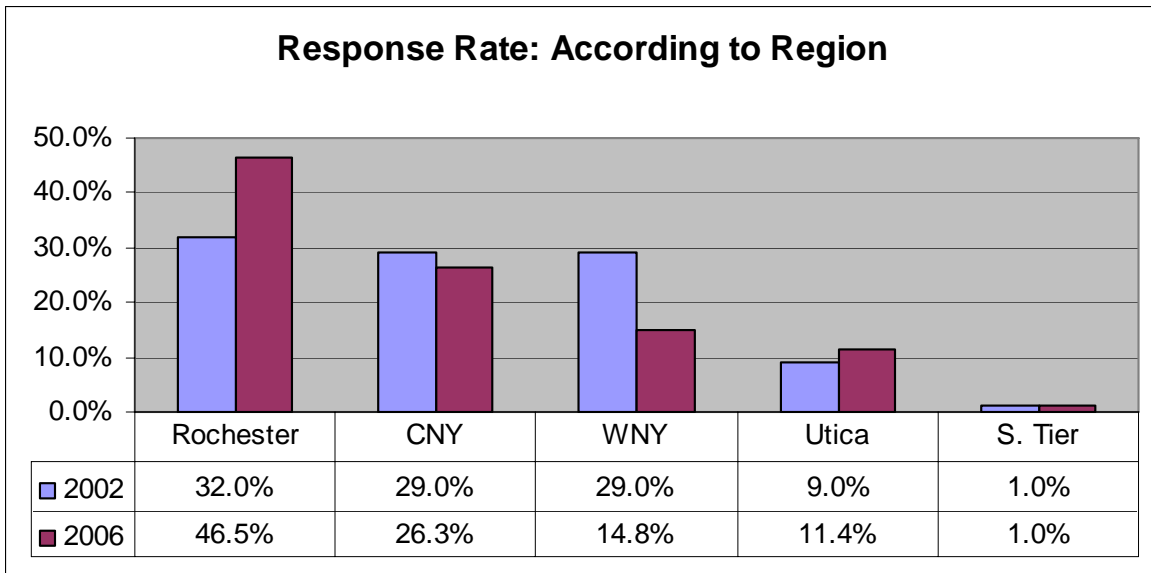
Response Rate

Graph A illustrates the total response rate of 52% (2,133 returns) for the 2006 23 question Employee Health Care Decisions Survey. This represents a 17% increase from 2002 when a 6 question survey was distributed to employees to assess completion rates of Health Care Proxies (HCP) and Living Wills (LW) and employee interest in receiving more information.



Graph A: Survey Response Rate

Graph B illustrates the comparable response rates per region for both the 2002 and 2006 surveys. The Rochester Region includes employees from the Health Plan, Excellus Benefit Services and MedAmerica. In comparison to the response rates from 2002, the response rate in the Rochester region increased by 14.5% while the WNY region response rate decreased by 14.2%. Other regions showed no statistically significant difference.



Graph B: Survey Response Rate per Region

Knowledge of Advance Directives

On first glance, employees appear to understand basic terms used in Advance Care Planning as 96% of employees recognize the term Health Care Proxy and 98% acknowledge awareness of the term Living Will.

Surprisingly, survey results indicate that 55% of employees are not familiar with the term Advance Directives. While 85% appreciate that a Health Care Proxy, Living Will and Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Order fall under the category of Advance Directives, 11% of employees though it meant only DNR.

While 96% of employees recognize the term Health Care Proxy, 98.7% appreciate that a Health Care Proxy is “a person that you appoint to make medical care decisions for you if you become unable to make decisions due to illness or injury.” However, 21% believe inaccurately that a Health Care Proxy must be notarized and prepared by an attorney. While 96.7% acknowledge that “Every adult should designate a Health Care Proxy to make health care decisions for them in case they lose the ability to make their own decisions.

However, 98% acknowledge awareness of the term Living Will; yet, nearly 10% lack understanding and describe a Living Will as “a legal form that indicates how your estate will be divided.”

Resources Used to Access Health Information

Question #18 focused on understanding better how employees access health information. Multiple responses were allowed. 54.8% of employees use a health-related resource site such as WebMD, while 35.5% consult our corporate web site. 46.4% rely on their physician. 12% of respondents provided a myriad of other responses including consult with friends, family, articles, books, TV, legal and health care professionals, including Excellus Health Plan Medical Directors and nursing staff, as well as spiritual and professional organizations.

Completion Rates of Health Care Proxies and Living Wills

Self-reported completion rates of Health Care Proxies and Living Wills from the 2006 survey were compared to similar results from the 2002 survey. 33.5% of employees have completed a Health Care Proxy, up from 30% in 2002. In 2002, 18% of respondents had completed a living will and 17% in 2006. While this is not a statistically significant change, the 2006 results reveal 33.4% of employees are ready to complete their documents and 30% have identified barriers that need to be addressed.

Timing of Health Care Proxy and Living Will Completion

Of those who have completed a Health Care Proxy, 72.3% of employees have completed the document in the past 5 years. Only 17% completed a Health Care Proxy in the past year since the increased media exposure with the Terry Schiavo case. Indeed, nearly 75% of employees indicate that the Terry Schiavo case played no role at all in their decision.

Of those who have completed a Living Will, 66% of employees have completed the document in the past 5 years. 11.5% completed a Health Care Proxy in the past year since the increased media exposure with the Terry Schiavo case.

Health Care Proxy and Living Will Form Distribution

Employees have not consistently shared copies of their Health Care Proxy and Living Will. Employees have shared a copy of their Health Care Proxy only 56.2% of the time with the person appointed as their health care proxy; 51.5% of the time with their physician, 32% of the time with their attorney, and less than 50% of the time with their spouse or significant other.

Employees also indicate they share a copy with Ob-Gyn office, church, insurance company. Several keep a copy with them as a wallet card; keep it in a potentially inaccessible location ('locked safely at home'); or keep it in multiple locations ('in my car, wallet, a folder prominently displayed in our home in case of medical emergency, and saved on the computer.)

Copies of Living Wills are shared more frequently but there is no significant difference. Employees have shared a copy of their Living Will only 55.4% of the time with the person appointed as their health care proxy; 39.6% of the time with their physician, 62.9% of the time with their attorney, and 57.3% of the time with their spouse or significant other. Employees share a Living Will with their attorney nearly twice as often as a Health Care Proxy.

Employees also indicate keeping a copy of their Living Will in their wallet and sharing copies with children, parents, military and financial advisors.

Factors affecting Completion of HCP

Several factors play a role in employees' decision to complete a Health Care Proxy. Achieving peace of mind plays a significant role for 85.7% of employees, followed closely by avoiding problems for family/loved ones at 77.4% and personal experience with end-of-life care of others at 44.2%. 58% of employees added additional reasons including ensuring my wishes are honored, personal experience as a health care professional or while having a medical procedure, heeding recommendation of a legal or health care professional and influence of education provided by Dr. Pat Bomba.

Behavioral Readiness

The 2006 results reveal 33.5% of employees have completed a Health Care Proxy. Only 6% of employees see no need for a Health Care Proxy. 33.4% of employees are ready to complete their Health Care Proxy and attention must be paid to providing motivation and incentive to complete their Health Care Proxy. 30% of employees have identified barriers that need to be addressed.

Barriers to Completion

30% of employees have identified a wide variety of barriers that need to be addressed. Understanding employee barriers is critical. 19% indicate "I don't know where to get the necessary forms." 14% state "I don't know whom to designate as my health care proxy." 12% have trouble with the conversation, due to personal discomfort, family/friends unwillingness or unsure how to initiate the conversation. 21% of employees provided a myriad of response including the prominent response of procrastination, unsure of process, need both help and forms and assume that family can make all decisions.

Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative survey results were collected and analyzed. Self-reported completion rates of Health Care Proxies and Living Wills from the 2006 survey were compared to similar results from 2002. 33.5% of employees have completed a Health Care Proxy, up from 30% in 2002. With regards to Living Wills, there was no significant difference in completion rates with 18% in 2002 and 17% in 2006.

The 2006 Health Care Decisions Survey included a critical question on behavioral readiness; in essence using the Health Care Proxy Readiness Survey question developed in 2002 to measure the success of the Community Conversations on Compassionate Care workshop. Results confirm the workshop provides motivation for participants resulting in a statistically significant increase in Health Care Proxy completion rates. Focused interventions should be developed taking into account the behavioral readiness to complete an advance directive.

Only 6% of employees see no need for a Health Care Proxy. Given the leadership efforts of Health Plan on raising community awareness, one may speculate that this has impacted and resulted in better educated employees. However, the survey data focused on knowledge regarding advance directives, coupled with qualitative comments, confirm the need for further educational efforts.

30% have identified a myriad of barriers that need to be considered in the development of new employee interventions. Further in-depth analysis is still required.

33.4% of employees are ready to complete their documents. Providing motivation to do so is the primary goal in designing interventions. Factors identified by employees as playing a significant role in their decision to complete a Health Care Proxy are described in the Advance Care Planning booklet (achieving peace of mind and avoiding problems for family/loved ones) the Community Conversations on Compassionate Care workshop (personal experience with end-of-life care of others.) Despite the efforts to date, employees still do not recognize that information on Advance Care Planning including the appropriate forms are available on the corporate web sites.

Recommendations

1. Integrate Advance Care Planning and Advance Directives into the Wellness Through End-of-life Initiative.
2. Additional In-depth analysis of the 2006 Employee Health Care Decisions Survey is advised.
3. Establish standardized metrics to track advance directives completion rates among employees that is easily replicable.
 - a. Explore the feasibility of replicating the Health Care Decisions Survey for Health Plan customers.
 - b. Explore feasibility of adding questions on advance care planning and advance directives to Health Plan HRAs.
4. Trend data through serial surveys or data captured on HRA.
5. Set initial goal of increasing employee AD completion rates by at least 5% with launch of the 2007 Wellness through End-of-life Initiative program.
6. Set benchmarks for completion rates based on results of 2007 Wellness through End-of-life Initiative program.
7. Utilize Health Plan sponsored community interventions and collateral material:
 - a. Advance Care Planning booklets
 - b. Advance Care Planning posters
 - c. Advance Care Planning table toppers
 - d. Community Conversations on Compassionate Care (CCCC) workshop
 - e. Advance Care Planning Facilitator Training
8. Train regional Wellness Trainers in Advance Care Planning and Community Conversations workshop.
9. Consider development of phased employee interventions:
 - a. Phase 1: Web site direction, standardized series of emails
 - b. Phase 2: Advance Care Planning booklets, posters and table toppers
 - c. Phase 3: Tabling in the atrium, quick Q&A, ensure information and forms are easily available
 - d. Phase 4: Informational sessions using the CCCC workshop
10. Determine effectiveness of interventions through focused repeat survey. Expand on effective interventions; discontinue ineffective interventions.
11. Utilize results from Wellness Through End-of-life Initiative to create a model for educating employees on Advance Care Planning to better serve our customers and communities.
12. Develop community-wide goals for completion of Health Care Proxies and Living Wills and use employer-based metrics for Advance Directive completion rates as a proxy for community Advance Directive completion rates.

Appendix A

Employee Health Care Decisions Survey 2006

1. Have you ever heard of the term, Health Care Proxy?
 yes no **(skip to Q6)**

2. From what you have heard, which of the following best describes a Health Care Proxy?
 A form listing your current medications
 A person that you appoint to make medical care decisions for you if you become unable to make decisions due to illness or injury
 A document that is only needed for elderly individuals and very sick people
 A form that hospitals require prior to admission
 A form showing your chronic medical conditions in case you need emergency care

3. Have you designated a Health Care Proxy and completed a Health Care Proxy form?
 yes no **(skip to Q6)**

4. When did you first complete a Health Care Proxy form?
 Less than 6 months ago
 6 - 12 months ago
 1 - 2 years ago
 3 - 5 years ago
 More than 5 years ago

5. Who has a copy of your Health Care Proxy form? **(check all that apply)**
 The person who I have appointed as my Health Care Proxy
 My physician
 My hospital
 My attorney
 My spouse/significant other
 Close relative(s)
 Close friend(s)
 Just me
 Other _____

6. Have you ever heard of the term, Living Will?
 yes no (*skip to #11*)
7. From what you have heard, which of the following best describes a Living Will?
 A legal form that indicates how your estate will be divided.
 A list of your current medications that doctors can immediately refer to.
 A document that is only needed for terminal patients in hospice care.
 A form that shows your chronic medical conditions in case you ever need emergency care.
 A document that specifies your wishes and guides your medical care if you develop an irreversible or terminal condition and are unable to communicate
8. Have you completed a Living Will? yes no (*skip to #11*)
9. When did you first complete a Living Will?
 Less than 6 months ago
 6 - 12 months ago
 1 - 2 years ago
 3 - 5 years ago
 More than 5 years ago
10. Who has a copy of your Living Will? (*check all that apply*)
 The person who I have appointed as my Health Care Proxy
 My physician
 My hospital
 My attorney
 My spouse/significant other
 Close relative(s)
 Close friend(s)
 Just me
 Other _____
11. Choosing someone to make your health care decisions in case you cannot speak for yourself is called designating a 'Health Care Proxy.' Completing a **Health Care Proxy form** is the best way to do this. Which answer best describes you?
 I see no need to fill out a Health Care Proxy form. (*skip to Q#13*)

- I see the need to fill out a Health Care Proxy form, but there are barriers or reasons why I have not done it. **(skip to Q#13)**
- I am ready to fill out a Health Care Proxy form or I have already started. **(skip to Q#13)**
- I already filled out my Health Care Proxy form and it reflects my wishes.
- I already filled out my Health Care Proxy form, but it needs to be changed.

12. What role did the following factors play in your decision to complete a Health Care Proxy form?

	Significant Role	Small Role	No Role at all
Peace of mind knowing that I would receive care consistent with my wishes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Terri Schiavo case	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal experience with end-of-life care of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did not want to create additional problems for my family/loved ones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My physician recommended that I complete it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My spouse/relatives recommended that I complete it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ask Q13 only to those who have answered 1, 2, or 3 to Q#11

13. What would you say is the **primary** reason why you have not completed a Health Care Proxy form?

- I don't know enough about it.
- I don't know where to get the necessary forms.
- I don't think it's important.
- I'm too young to think about such things.
- I don't have enough time.
- I'm uncomfortable thinking about the topic.
- My family/friends seem unwilling to discuss the topic.
- I don't know how to bring up the topic.
- I don't know whom to designate as my health care proxy.

- I'm waiting for my doctor to bring up the topic.
- Other _____

14. Have you ever heard of the term, Advance Directives?

- yes
- no (*skip to Q16*)

15. Which of the following would fall under the category of Advance Directives?

- Health Care Proxy form
- Living Will
- Do Not Resuscitate Order
- All of the above

16. Has your doctor ever talked to you about Health Care Proxies and Living Wills?

- yes
- no

17. Please indicate whether the following statements are true or false.

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>
I can appoint a Health Care Proxy without actually completing a Living Will.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can complete a Living Will without actually designating a Health Care Proxy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Health Care Proxy form must be notarized and prepared by an attorney.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Every adult should designate a Health Care Proxy to make medical care decisions for them in case they lose the ability to make their own decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18. If you want to learn more about a health topic, where do you usually get your health care information? (check all that apply)

- I rely on my physician.
- I look for community resources, such as presentations.
- I use an Internet search engine such as Google, Yahoo!, MSN or Ask.com.
- I consult our corporate web site (www.excellusbcbs.com or www.univera.com).
- I use a health-oriented web resource site such as WebMD.
- I go to the public library.
- Other: _____

The last few demographic questions are for classification purposes only.

19. Which region are you from?
- Rochester
 - Central New York
 - Southern Tier
 - Utica
 - Western NY
20. Your age is:
- 18-24
 - 25-34
 - 35-44
 - 45-54
 - 55-64
 - 65 or over
 - I prefer not to answer
21. Are you: Male Female
22. What is your marital status:
- Single
 - Married
 - Separated or Divorced
 - Widowed
 - I prefer not to answer
23. What is your highest level of education completed:
- Up to and including some High School
 - High School Graduate or G.E.D.
 - Some College but no degree
 - Associate's Degree or Certificate Program
 - Bachelor's Degree
 - Advanced Degree (e.g., Master's, Ph.D., M.D.)
 - I prefer not to answer

Two types of advance directives are a health care proxy and living will.

A **health care proxy** is a legal document that lets you name someone to make decisions about your medical care if you can no longer speak for yourself.

A **living will** is a form that lets you state your wishes about medical care in the event that you develop an irreversible condition that prevents you from making your own medical decisions.

It is important to have conversations with your family, your close friends and your physician to be sure they understand your wishes. Share copies of the completed advance directives with these trusted individuals. Completing advance directives can give you and your family peace of mind by reducing uncertainty and helping to avoid confusion and conflict over your care.

Everyone age 18 and older should complete a health care proxy and living will.

Appendix B
Advance Care Directives Survey 2002

1. Would you say that you know what an Advance Care Directive is? Yes No
(Health care proxies and living wills are types of advance care directives.)

2. Have you ever: Appointed a Health Care Proxy? Yes No
 Completed a Living Will? Yes No

3. Please indicate whether you are interested in any of the following: *(Please check all that apply):*
 - I would like more information regarding advance care directives.
 - I would like state-specific Health Care Proxy & Living Will Forms.
 - I would like information regarding artificial nutrition and hydration.
 - I would like to attend a noontime informational meeting about advance care directives.
 - I would like to review and update my advance care directives.

4. Where are you employed?:
 - Rochester Central NY Utica Southern Tier Buffalo

5. Into which of the following age groups do you fall?
 - 18 - 24 25 - 34 35 - 44 45 - 54 55 - 64 65 and over

6. Check your employment background:
 - Corporate/Insurance/Other Medical/Health/Home Care

Appendix C
2006 Health Care Decisions Survey Team

Ginger Parysek, Sr. Vice President, Human Resources

Dr. Patricia Bomba, Vice President & Medical Director, Geriatrics

Kathleen Richardson, Summer College Intern

Emily Martinez-Vogt, Program Implementation Manager

Julian Peretz, Management Consultant

Shirley Noone, Management Consultant

Pete Cost, Management Consultant

Jan Caster, Corporate Communications