Advance Care Planning in the Comox Valley

‘OUR STORY’
Advance Care Planning

‘It always seems too early ... until it’s too late’
How we began . . .

• Change in BC Legislation – September 2011

• BC Ministry of Health release of ‘My Voice Guide’

• Spring 2012 Vancouver Island Federation of Hospices ACP Session - Nanaimo
Local ACP Committee Established in 2012

• CVHS Staff
• CVHS Volunteers
• SJGH Clergy
Brainstorming ... Where to begin? 

With us!

• Took time to do our own advance care plans
• Looked at local resources – Comox Valley region
• Asked where the community might be re: ACP
• Reflected on what is unique to our region, eg. Artistic community, strong support for local initiatives, ongoing changes in local health care
• Agreed we needed to build on existing community partnerships and explore new ones
Our focus

• ‘Upstream’ – before crisis happens
• Individual and community conversations – ‘Having the Talk’
• Thinking ‘Outside the Box’
Where we began . . . 4 Strategies

• Communication
• Community Engagement & Partnerships
• Public Education
• heARTful Expressions
Communication

• Development of local Comox Valley Advance Care Planning Website
  www.AdvanceCarePlanningCV.ca

• Ongoing relationship with local media outlets – articles, workshop promotion and ACP profiles
Have you had ‘the talk’ about advance care planning?

Advance care planning is a process of reflection and communication that can take place across your lifespan. It is a time for you to reflect on your beliefs, values, and wishes. It is a time to let others know your health care and personal preferences if you are ever unable to speak for yourself.

Advance care planning means having discussions with family and friends, as well as your health care, financial, and legal professionals. It may also include writing down your wishes and naming a designated ‘Representative’ as someone you choose to be your spokesperson in a time of need. This is some of what advance care planning is all about.

In 2012 the Comox Valley Hospice Society began partnering with individuals and organizations to help start the conversation about advance care planning and, where advance care plans already exist, to encourage individuals and families to review and further clarify their current wishes. We continue to promote these community conversations to enhance understanding of what matters most to you and your loved ones.
Push on to get valley talking about end-of-life care

Advance Care Planning
a gift to loved ones
as death is knocking

By Drew A. Perrier

A number of voices from across the Comox Valley are coming together to inspire community members to tackle difficult conversations about end-of-life care.

The Comox Valley Hospice Society is offering two introductory workshops on advance care planning April 16, which has been designated National Advance Care Planning Day. Organizers hope this will provide an important tool to spark Valley residents towards contemplating something that can be difficult to talk about. Their aim is to help make the big final chapter of life as special and stress-free as possible for people.

Advance care planning is the process of explicitly detailing how you want to be cared for in the event you can’t speak for yourself.

It’s something everyone needs to do, according to Audrey Craig, president of the Comox Valley Hospice Society.

“Ther’s just so much stress when someone’s sick,” she said. “It just makes it easier.”

While she has had to deal with the loss of both her parents over the past five years, Craig says she’s glad there was no uncertainty around how they hoped to be cared for in their last days.

“We know what their final wishes were,” she said. “It’s all about having the conversations.

Unlike a will, there is no cost associated with preparing an advance care plan. It’s not viewed as a static decree, but instead as a living document that can evolve over time.

While it might take some thinking and soul searching to put together, health care officials say it doesn’t have to be a difficult exercise.

Comox Valley MLA Dan McRae hopes people of all ages across the Comox Valley embrace advance care planning as a process of communicating effectively as they near the end of their lives.

Hospital challenges

Every day hospital employees face the challenge of discerning the wishes of those who are incapable of communicating effectively as they near the end of their lives.

Jane Murphy, president and CEO of St. Joseph’s General Hospital, says advance care planning adds clarity to often frustrating and murky times.

“I’ve personally seen many instances where the wishes of the patient were not known,” she said. “The lack of mutual understanding created divisions for families and loved ones.”

She understands end-of-life issues can be tough to bring up, particularly in our modern world.

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Comox Valley Hospice Society
Community Engagement & Partnerships

- Role of Comox Valley Hospice Society – CVHS
- Comox Valley End of Life Resource Team
- Comox Valley Record & Echo Newspapers
- Workshop Locations
- North Island College – School of Nursing
- Other Community Partners
Our Community Partners

Comox Valley Hospice Society

BERWICK
COMOX VALLEY

Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem

RICE TOYOTA COURtenay

St. Joseph's General Hospital in affiliation with Vancouver Island Health Authority

Comox Valley Community Foundation
Public Education

• Development of ACP Community Workshops
• Part I – Introduction to ACP
• Part II – Working on your ACP
• Volunteer Facilitators
• Ongoing Presentations
• Hosted in wide range of workshop locales
Public Education Events

National ACP Day - April 16th

2013
• ‘Are You Listening to Me?’
• ‘Consider the Conversation’

2014
• heARTful Expressions

2015
• Newspaper ACP Profiles
• Introduction to ACP Workshops

2016
• ‘Being Mortal’
"Creative outlets of expression allow complex and strong feelings to be rendered in tangible forms that have the power to express things that words alone cannot."

Center for Hospice Care, Southeast Connecticut
The heART of advance care planning
have the conversation
express your wishes
Allow your voice to be heard
Reveal what is important to you
Tell those you love
What has worked . . .

• Strategic support of Comox Valley Hospice Society at Board level
• Core group of consistent, dedicated staff & ACP volunteers
• Community engagement and partnerships
• ACP Workshop format
• Comox Valley ACP website
• Unique ‘outside the box’ ACP Committee
Challenges . . .

- Public view of ‘not me – not now’
- Perceptions of BC ‘My Voice Guide’
- Perspective that ACP is a Seniors’ issue
- Existing Health Care Priorities in Comox Valley
- Physician & Medical Office Staff engagement
Challenges . . .

• Recognition that ACP is an ongoing life long conversation
• Consistency of language & ‘alphabet’ soup – ACP, CPR, DNR, PAD, AND, MOST ...
• Interest of health care professionals
• What does ‘advance’ care planning mean?
• How to respond to changes in legislation (PAD) and health care (MOST)
Moving Forward . . .

• Brainstorm strategies annually
• Expand public education and workshops
• Further engagement of health professionals
• Increase involvement of aligned organizations & businesses
• ACP is the ‘right thing to do’
Special thanks to ...

• Comox Valley ACP Volunteers – current and past
• Our workshop participants who continue to share with us what is most important to them
• CVHS Board, Staff and Volunteers
• Our community partners
It always seems too early... until it’s too late

Thank you
Comox Valley ACP Committee

Barb Colwell
Barb Warren
Joyce Kuhn
Sharon Bearpark
Terri Odeneal

With thanks to former members
Christy Linder, Ted Hicks, Dandelion, Lynn Black
& CVHS Staff for their support