

# LIVING LIFE TO ITS FULLEST

*The campaign for  
the Macon F. Brock Jr.  
Palliative Care  
Endowment*

## **The Courageous Conversation: Talking about your Advance Care Plan with friends and loved ones.**

Advance care planning ensures that others – your loved ones, whether family members or close friends – are prepared to act on your behalf when you can't speak for yourself.

The most difficult part of such planning can be the conversations with loved ones who you wish to legally appoint to act on your behalf. It does take courage, which is why it's often called "The Courageous Conversation." After all, who wants to think or talk about our own mortality? Why bring up the potential of an unexpected terminal illness or death that may never occur? Unfortunately, life can sometimes throw us a curveball, so it is best to be prepared.

*What is an advance care plan?* An advance care plan (or advance directive) legally states your wishes for care if you are ever faced with a critical or emergency medical situation.

Advance care planning should ideally start at the legal age of 18 and be reconsidered throughout one's lifespan as your life experiences, religious beliefs, and values may affect your original wishes.

Putting together an advance care directive is easy. You can do it yourself without the need for an attorney if you choose. In Virginia, there are online tools available to assist you at [Virginia Advance Directives](#).

If you already have an advance care directive, you can securely file it at [Connect Virginia](#) to make it available to family members, emergency providers, hospitals, and other medical providers in case of need.

So don't be afraid to have those "courageous conversations" with your loved ones. By involving them in your plans, you might just inspire others to create their own advance care plan as well.