

Take charge of end-of-life decisions

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On Tuesday, April 12, Big Bend Hospice, the Florida State University College of Medicine and College of Law will host Take Charge Florida: End-of-Life Decisions and You. The event will take place at the Florida State University College of Medicine Auditorium, 1115 West Call Street. There will be free parking outside the auditorium and at the parking garage at Spirit Way and Stadium Drive. A resource fair will begin at 5 p.m., and the program will begin at 6 p.m. CEUs in Social Work and Nursing are also available.

The program discussion will be led by Professor Marshall Kapp, Director of the Center for Innovative Collaboration in Medicine & Law at FSU, and a faculty member of the FSU College of Medicine and FSU College of Law. Professor Kapp has published and spoken extensively on topics in health law, medical ethics, as well as law and aging, and served as editor or on the editorial board of a number of prestigious journals.

“I think it is safe to say that we at Big Bend Hospice try to promote every day, as if it were National Healthcare Decisions Day,” said Cathy Adkison, CEO of Big Bend Hospice. “We are hoping that our efforts and events will foster a conversation that is very important for families to have.”

Recognized on April 16 of each year, the mission of National Healthcare Decisions Day is to inspire, educate and empower the public about the importance of advance care planning. Big Bend Hospice, the region’s hometown hospice, regularly promotes two programs that this year’s National Healthcare Decisions Day will be centered around.

Five Wishes, an advance care planning document published by Aging with Dignity, focuses on addressing a patient’s healthcare wishes in the event that they cannot advocate for themselves. This is an internationally recognized document, and in partnership with Aging with Dignity, Big Bend Hospice distributes them at no-charge to any person residing in the Big Bend region.

Big Bend Hospice also operates the PEACE (Planning Early About Care at the End) program, a Respecting Choices program designed to assist people in understanding, discussing, and communicating their advance directives through one-on-one conversation with a trained facilitator. These sessions are nonthreatening and often life-affirming, and can be scheduled by calling the Big Bend Hospice office at 850-878-5310.

“Advance care planning at the end of life, is not really advance care planning,” said Candace McKibben, Big Bend Hospice Director of Faith Outreach. “We want to ensure that our friends and neighbors understand the importance of having this conversation in a living room instead of an emergency room.”

To request more information about the event, contact Candace McKibben at 850-878-5310 or candace@bigbendhospice.org.

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