

Conversation of Your Life (COYL)

The New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute's (Quality Institute) *Conversation of Your Life (COYL)* initiative was launched in 2014 to improve end-of-life care planning from a cultural and community perspective. COYL, a program of the Quality Institute's Mayors Wellness Campaign, provides community leaders and local partners with tools to develop engaging community conversations around end-of-life care planning. Generously funded by The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, COYL is currently active in over a dozen counties and continues to grow statewide.

End-of-life Care in New Jersey

- New Jersey performs poorly on the quality of end-of-life care in comparison to almost every other state in the nation (Dartmouth Atlas).
- A [2019 Health Matters poll](#) found that 61 percent of New Jersey adults have thought about their wishes for medical care towards the end of their life, but only 47 percent have actually talked to someone about their wishes. And most, 70 percent, have not documented these wishes in writing.
- Although providers can be reimbursed for having end-of-life care consultations with patients, the 2019 poll found that just 24 percent of people actually talked to a doctor or health care provider about their wishes.

Conversation of Your Life seeks to improve these numbers so individuals receive the care they want at the end of their lives.

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COYL's mission is to integrate advance care planning into the cultural fabric of a community to make talking about death and end-of-life care as comfortable as discussing other phases of life. Its goal is to increase the number of residents who have documented their end-of-life wishes and communicated them to their family and health care providers.

The program's success is driven by its local volunteer COYL Task Forces which include trusted members of the community such as county and municipal officials (mayors, health officers, county surrogates), religious leaders, librarians, and health care professionals. COYL also partners with hospitals, nursing homes, and hospice providers. COYL's community outreach and educational programming is engaging and inclusive, utilizing community book reads, film festivals, and art-related projects, along with facilitated sessions about advance care planning. COYL materials and programs are being adapted to a variety of cultures, religions, and languages. Programming is consistently evaluated and refined based on feedback and data.

End-of-life care can be improved with informed conversations about end-of-life care options and clear documentation of an individual's wishes. COYL, with the help of Task Force members, is driving this change.

To learn more about COYL or to get involved, contact info@njhcqi.org or visit www.njhcqi.org/COYL.