

# COYL

## CONVERSATION OF YOUR LIFE



*Planning ahead for your health care is one of the most important things you can do for yourself and those who matter most to you. This handout gives you key steps and free resources to help you start today.*

### 3 EASY WAYS TO GET STARTED

#### **Step 1 – Choose a Health Care Proxy**

Pick someone you trust to speak for you if you can't. Talk with them about your wishes.

#### **Step 2 – Think About What Matters Most to You**

Ask yourself: What makes life meaningful for me? What treatments feel helpful? Which might feel like too much? Where do I feel at peace?

#### **Step 3 – Write It Down and Share It**

Use a form or starter kit to document your wishes. Give copies to your proxy, family, and health care providers. Review and update over time.

### WHY IT IS WORTH PLANNING AHEAD

- 1.Reduces stress and conflict for those who matter most
- 2.Ensures your values and preferences are honored
- 3.Gives you peace of mind knowing your voice will be heard

### HOW TO START THE TALK

- 1.“If I were too sick to speak for myself, here’s what I’d want...”
- 2.“The three most important things about my care are...”
- 3.“Who would speak for me if I couldn’t?”



## PLANNING RESOURCES

**COYL Media Clubs:** Start the conversation through movies, media, and more to break the ice.

**Conversation Project Resources:** Step-by-step guide to reflect on and share your wishes

**Five Wishes:** A nationally recognized document covering medical, personal, and spiritual wishes.

**NJ Advance Directive Forms:** Official state forms to name a proxy and outline your wishes.

**POLST:** For people with serious illness who want to spell out treatment orders with their doctor.

**4 Step iCare Plan:** A quick guide to making health care decisions.

**MyDirectives.com:** A free, secure online tool to create, store, update, and share your advance care plan. Available anywhere, anytime.

## KEY TERMS TO KNOW

**Advance Care Planning (ACP):** Thinking about and writing down your wishes for future health care if you can't speak for yourself.

**Health Care Proxy / Health Care Agent:** The person you choose to make medical decisions for you if you can't. Sometimes called a "surrogate" or "representative."

**Advance Directive (AD):** A legal form that says who your proxy is and what treatments you do or don't want.

**Living Will:** A written statement about the kinds of treatments you want or don't want at the end of life. Often part of an Advance Directive.

**POLST (Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment):** A medical order you complete with your doctor to spell out which life-sustaining treatments you do or don't want. Typically for people with serious illness.

**Five Wishes:** A nationally recognized document that covers medical, personal, emotional, and spiritual wishes.



## TAKE ONE SMALL STEP TODAY

Download a Starter Kit, choose your proxy, or start a conversation with someone you care about.

## ABOUT COYL

COYL, an initiative of the Quality Institute's [New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute's Mayors Wellness Campaign](#), and a statewide program that is here to provide you with education and resources on how to share your wishes for care and what you need to know about picking a health care proxy.

