

Building an End-of-Life Coalition How to Get Started

- **Identify key individuals** already involved in improving care for the dying. Hospice workers, chaplains and other clergy, caregivers, senior leaders, parish nurses, support group leaders, funeral directors, hospital ethicists and educators are likely participants.
- **Bring interested people together** to talk about community needs and capabilities. If interest and/or resources allow, you may want to consider a community survey to help prioritize your activities.
- **Develop a list of activities** to engage your community. Ideas include:
 - Distributing the Decisions series of articles as bulletin inserts in faith communities or organization newsletters.
 - Sponsoring Talking It Over discussion groups.
 - Developing a speakers' bureau and offering presentations to civic and service groups.
 - Sponsoring community forums and seminars on topics such as Advance Care Planning.
 - Organizing activities for Health Care Decisions Week.
 - Encouraging local media coverage of end-of-life issues; helping to identify story ideas and recruiting experts and those with personal stories to share.
- **Prioritize your list**, identifying those ideas where you have available resources (people, connections, funding). Look for activities that can be accomplished fairly quickly, and recruit a key individual to take the lead for each. Don't take on too much; build on the enthusiasm that small successes bring!
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Funding Support

Many of the activities undertaken by coalitions can be accomplished with few outside resources, but more ambitious ideas often need funding. Several coalitions have pooled community resources, with various groups contributing meeting space, printing, mailing, publicity, etc. Others sought funding from outside sources by soliciting community donations and applying for grants from hospital foundations, other healthcare organizations and private foundations. Some have charged modest membership fees to generate operating expenses.

For more information, contact the California Coalition for Compassionate Care at 916.489.2222 or info@finalchoices.org.