

# Living Matters

## advance care planning

### Helping your patients plan ahead to live well

When it comes to giving patients and their loved ones peace of mind about their future health and personal care, General Practitioners (GPs) can do so by seeding awareness and initiating Advance Care Planning (ACP) discussions. Being the family doctor for your patients, you are in an ideal position to discuss their values and goals for care in a setting that is most comfortable to them. By making their medical care goals and preferences about healthcare options known early, patients can be assured that their loved ones and healthcare team will know what their wishes are and be prepared to care for them when the need arises.

This also minimises crisis decision-making and potential conflicts between family members as it ensures that decisions will be made in the patients' best interests, should they no longer be able to express their wishes. ACP can be supplemented by the Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA), which allows patients to legally appoint an LPA donee to make financial and personal welfare decisions on their behalf.

#### How are ACP and LPA related?

The ACP spokesperson is naturally suited to be the patient's LPA donee too, as participation in the ACP discussion allows them to better understand the wishes of the patient. This in turn guides them in these roles of making decisions on behalf of the patient.

To kick-start ACP conversations with your patients, simply follow the steps of "ACP Support":

#### STEP 1

##### Advocate future care planning...

"I'd like to talk to you about Advance Care Planning or ACP as this will help both of us to understand your values and preferences for health care options if you become seriously ill."

#### STEP 2

##### Clarify patient's clinical condition and goals for care...

"Can you share more about your medical condition and how it has changed over the past years?"

"Where and how do you want to be cared for if you become very sick?"

#### STEP 3

##### Pick a Spokesperson...

"Who do you trust to make decisions for you on your behalf?"

#### STEP 4

##### Support your patient:

- Share the ACP brochure with them.
- Direct them to the "My Care Wishes" workbook, which can be found on [www.livingmatters.sg/health-care-professionals](http://www.livingmatters.sg/health-care-professionals). Patients can use it to record their care preferences and wishes themselves.
- Continue the ACP conversations at subsequent visits.

To learn more about ACP, including training details to become a Certified ACP Facilitator, or to request for ACP materials for your patients, visit [www.primarycarepages.sg/livingmatters](http://www.primarycarepages.sg/livingmatters) or contact AIC at [gp@aic.sg](mailto:gp@aic.sg) or **6632 1199**.

