on April 16, 2015, National Health Care Decisions Day (NHDD), the PCS Ethics in Clinical Practice Committee (EICPC) hosted its 14th annual Advance Care Planning information booth for patients, staff, and visitors. NHDD was created to inspire, educate, and empower providers and the public about the importance of advance care planning. It encourages individuals to express their healthcare wishes and reminds caregivers of the importance of respecting those wishes. A proclamation from Mayor Martin Walsh was on display at the booth, further emphasizing the need for greater awareness about advance care planning.

EICPC champions staffed the booth, providing consultation and giving out copies of the Massachusetts Health Care Proxy forms, a list of Internet resources, and the MGH-produced, Preparing in Advance for your Health Care and Preparing to be a Health Care Agent to those who stopped by. A Spanish version of the Health Care Proxy form was available for viewing, as was the ‘Five Wishes’ advance directive form for adults, children, and adolescents. (Five Wishes forms are available in the Blum Patient & Family Learning Center and also on-line through the Aging with Dignity website: www.aging-withdignity.org).

Information was available on the new Massachusetts Department of Public Health initiative, Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST). This is used for patients of any age with advanced illness to state their preferences for life-sustaining treatments such as CPR, dialysis, or a breathing tube. MOLST is not an advance directive; it’s a medical order intended to communicate and document a patient’s treatment preferences across all care settings.

Individuals can change their advance directives or MOLST forms at any time for any reason. Changes in health condition, personal values or beliefs, or treatment preferences are some of the reasons people revise these documents.

To download a copy of the Massachusetts Health Care Proxy form (in English and other languages), go to: Partners Applications>PCS Clinical Resources>Health Care Proxy forms.

To obtain copies of Preparing in Advance for your Health Care and Preparing to be a Health Care Agent, or the MOLST forms, follow the links in PCOI: Patient Information>Senior Health or End of life>Advance Care, or request them through Standard Register (SR document #84669). For information about MOLST, go to: www.molst-ma.org. For information about advance care planning and the annual information booth, contact Cynthia LaSala, RN, at 617-724-6010.