

Partnering to improve health for all.

Foundation for Healthy Communities

April 2022

Executive Director's Message

Welcome to Spring!

With April showers set to bring May flowers, we are excited that the improving COVID conditions are providing the opportunity to reconnect with neighbors, friends and colleagues in person which is a very positive step forward. Much of the Foundation team has welcomed the chance to resume field meetings, and it's been a pleasure to return to the communities of our partners.

Being with and among those we work with and support always provides the best opportunity for us to learn and understand the needs of those we serve. Safety remains our top priority as we continue our efforts, and we look forward to reconnecting with you soon!

Yours in health,

Peter



Peter Ames, MPH
Executive Director

Foundation for Healthy Communities Celebrates National Healthcare Decisions Month

National Initiative Highlights the Importance of Advance Directives in April

Every April, the Foundation for Healthy Communities joins a national movement in observance of **National Healthcare Decisions Month** to highlight the importance of advance healthcare directives which guides the care delivered when a person lacks the capacity to make their own health care decisions.

“National Healthcare Decisions Month is a reminder to talk with your provider, your family and friends about your healthcare wishes in the event of a medical crisis,” said Brian Kugel, Program Coordinator at the Foundation for Healthy Communities. “Engaging in the

National Healthcare Decisions Month highlights the importance of advance care planning to ensure your family & your healthcare provider know your choices for end-of-life care.



conversation and completing an advance directive allows you to decide who will make your healthcare decisions should you ever lack the capacity to do so, and it's one of the most important conversations for families to have with each other, especially during times like these."

Recently, the Foundation conducted its Annual Advance Directive Audit of the state's 26 hospitals to determine the number of patients that had an advance directive on file or that filled one out while an inpatient. This survey found that while 43% of patients reported having an advanced directive when asked at time of admission, only 32% of 1,816 patients had advance directive information in their medical chart on record with the hospital or their provider.

National Healthcare Decisions Day, held every year on April 16th, is an annual initiative nationwide to provide clear, concise, and consistent information on healthcare decision-making to both the public and providers/facilities through the widespread availability and dissemination of simple, free, and uniform tools to guide the process.

"The focus of **National Healthcare Decisions Day** is educating families and healthcare providers on the importance of advance care directives and to encourage planning for serious illness or end-of-life care," Kugel added.

In addition to advance directives, Provider Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST) play an integral role in advance care planning. With the goal of improving the quality of care for patients who are seriously ill, POLST acts as a portable medical order that identifies, documents, communicates and honors patient medical treatment wishes that are honored across all care settings. This voluntary program is designed to improve the understanding and communication of a patient's medical care choices when patients move among different health care settings.

The Foundation for Healthy Communities has served as the leading resource for advance care and end of life care planning, including POLST, for patients and their families, medical providers, hospitals and health systems throughout the state since 1998. The Foundation provides information to help people address the topic with family, friends and healthcare providers. In addition, it provides education on completing a written advance directive, such as healthcare power of attorney and a living will, in accordance with New Hampshire law. More information and resources, including the Advance Care Planning Guide, are available free of charge online at www.healthynh.org.

[Download the Advance Care Planning Guide](#)

National Prescription Drug **TAKE BACK DAY**

Saturday, April 30th

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Turn in your unused or expired
medication for safe disposal



This Saturday, April 30th, is **National Drug Take Back Day**, where local agencies around New Hampshire, along with the Drug Enforcement Administration, will give the public the opportunity to prevent prescription medication abuse and theft by removing any potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs from their medicine cabinets.

This initiative addresses a vital public safety and public health issue. Given the current opioid crisis that New Hampshire communities and families are facing, **National Drug Take Back Day** provides the opportunity to safely dispose of unused or expired prescription drugs and

promote education about the dangers of prescription drug abuse. Expired or unused medications that are left in home cabinets are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse. Rates of prescription drug abuse in the U.S. are alarmingly high, as are the number of accidental poisonings and overdoses due to these drugs.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's National Survey on Drug Use and Health shows year after year that the majority of misused and abused prescription drugs are obtained from family and friends, such as medication being stolen from the home medicine cabinet. Flushing these medications down the toilet or throwing them in the trash pose potential safety and health hazards. Help prevent prescription drug abuse by taking your unused or expired medications to a local agency who will safely dispose of them.

For more information about the disposal of prescription drugs, National Take Back Day or to find a take back location near you, go to www.DEATakeBack.com.

The Foundation for Healthy Communities is Seeking an Intern to Support its Programs & Initiatives

The Foundation for Healthy Communities is currently seeking a candidate for an internship that will provide a wide range of public health and health care improvement project exposure. The Intern will assist Program Directors in support of their project deliverables by undertaking and managing aspects of the program. This may include research, writing and communications, data and evaluation, presentation design, and other duties relevant to the individual project. Interns will have the opportunity to join meetings, both onsite and in the field, to help increase their understanding of the topics, as well as the partnerships that are developed through our initiatives.

In addition to the Foundation programs, interns will have responsibilities to learn about and support the organization itself. This includes budgets and accounting, grant development and management, organization operations, and governance. As an affiliate organization of the New Hampshire Hospital Association, interns will also be exposed to health care policy and advocacy issues relevant to health systems in the state. Additionally, interns will provide clerical support for the programs, which may include taking and drafting minutes, preparing meeting materials, and other office duties as needed.

This opportunity is a paid internship for a college student that can take place either during the semester (Fall or Spring) or the summer. Anyone interested can [click here](#) to learn more or contact us at info@healthynh.org.

We wish you all a healthy and happy Spring!



STAY CONNECTED

