



Honoring Choices® Pacific Northwest Initiative to Improve Care for People with Serious Illness
Washington clinicians can now access serious illness conversation training and support

Honoring Choices Pacific Northwest is pleased to announce a collaboration with Ariadne Labs to ensure every person with serious illness feels known and cared for on their own terms. Ariadne Labs is a joint center for health systems innovation at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. This new initiative will build on Honoring Choices PNW’s foundational work to promote basic advance care planning in the region by equipping health care providers to have conversations with their seriously ill patients about their goals, values, and preferences.

“The goal is that every patient with serious illness feels known and cared for on their own terms,” Ariadne Labs’ Serious Illness Care Program senior scientist and physician Erik Fromme, MD, said. “That all starts with compassionate and clear communication because people have goals beyond just surviving and health care is incredibly complex and confusing. If we as health professionals understand what matters most to our patients, it prepares us, our patients, and their families to make the best possible decisions, even in a crisis.”

“People who discuss their values, goals, and preferences are more likely to receive the care they want, feel less distress, and have more hope,” Washington State Medical Association Foundation for Health Care Improvement president Dale Reisner, MD, said. “However, for most patients in their last year of life, these conversations happen too late or don’t happen at all.”

Under the new initiative, Honoring Choices PNW, also sponsored by the Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA), will offer training in the Serious Illness Conversation Guide and introduce Ariadne Labs’ Serious Illness Care Program to the region. Created by a team of palliative care experts, the Serious Illness Care Program is a multi-component program centered around a conversation guide that offers clinicians language to ask patients about their goals, values, and preferences. In addition to the Serious Illness Conversation Guide, the program includes clinician training, system-level implementation support, patient resources and an online community of clinicians and implementers. More than 28,000 clinicians around the world have been trained to use the Serious Illness Care Program.

A [four-year randomized control trial](#), developed by Ariadne Labs and tested at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, examined the impact of the Serious Illness Care Program. Findings show that the program resulted in more, earlier, and better conversations between patients and their oncology clinicians, and led to significant reductions in emotional suffering for patients with advanced cancer.

Honoring Choices PNW will learn from Ariadne Labs over the next year and then deliver a large-scale training and coaching program across the region.

“Washington residents deserve to make informed, autonomous choices about their health care at all stages of life,” WSHA Board Chair Bill Robertson said, “I am delighted that Honoring Choices PNW is working with Ariadne Labs to offer this important training to ensure clinicians are best positioned to introduce care conversations with their patients.”

If you are interested in implementing the Ariadne Labs Serious Illness Care Program at your organization, please contact Sue Bergmann, senior director of Honoring Choices PNW at Sue.Bergmann@HonoringChoicesPNW.org.

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About Honoring Choices Pacific Northwest

Honoring Choices Pacific Northwest is a joint initiative of the Washington State Hospital Association and Washington State Medical Association Foundation for Health Care Improvement. We use a variety of approaches to inspire conversations about the care people want at the end of life, including an advance care planning program, community engagement, physician education, and advocacy. We help the public make informed choices about end-of-life care and help health care organizations and community groups discuss, record, and honor end-of-life choices. We are a philanthropic endeavor so all who want to participate can.

About the Washington State Hospital Association

The Washington State Hospital Association advocates for and provides value to members in achieving their missions and improving the health of their communities. WSHA represents more than 100 hospitals and health systems in the state, including those that are non-profit, investor-owned, and county, state and military hospitals. The Quadruple Aim guides our members and our work as we strive to reduce the cost of health care and improve the patient experience, the clinician experience and the health of our communities. Visit www.wsha.org for more information.

About the Washington State Medical Association Foundation for Health Care Improvement

At the WSMA Foundation, we believe in a future where physicians are healthy and fulfilled; where physicians, the health care team, and patients are partners; and where all Washingtonians experience quality care that aligns with their needs, goals, and values. Fulfilling that quest depends upon transformational change at all levels—individual, organizational, and statewide. We believe that change is possible, and that physicians and patients can thrive in health care settings that support them. The WSMA Foundation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Visit www.wsma.org/foundation for more information.