The following tips can help guide your efforts as you expand your Advance Care Planning (ACP) initiative across your health system, or scale up to reach more patients, providers, and your community.

Build Awareness

- Educate your organization about the importance, relevance and benefits of good ACP. Make a connection between the value of ACP activities and your organization's strategic priorities. You can start by reviewing links to research articles on the Five Wishes Practice Community page (www.FiveWishes.org/practice).

- Widen the definition of ACP beyond an advance directives and end-of-life focus. Include patient and community engagement, ongoing conversations across all levels of care, conversations with family, effective and accessible documentation, and honoring wishes.

Engage Leadership

- Find your ACP champions. Champions are most often people with personal ACP experiences. Encourage sharing of personal ACP stories at staff meetings and leadership meetings to identify people with passion and understanding. Storytelling is a powerful tool to help identify champions and start building a culture that values ACP. Remember that leaders can be formal and informal, and leadership involves both influence and passion.

- Include members of senior leadership. You will likely not have authority over all the divisions involved as your ACP program grows and expands across the system. Senior leaders can help ensure that you have support, resources, and buy-in.

- Engage leaders from across your system or departments. A collaborative group representing different areas helps you identify resources, solutions and challenges. Representatives from different clinical practice settings, marketing, quality, planning, and IT can all be helpful to taking an initiative system-wide.

Identify Goals

- Define a vision for taking ACP across your system, speaking to the difference you envision for patients and families, the community, and providers.

- Consider your system structure and clarify the scope of the areas you want to include in your ACP program in both the short-term and long-term.

- Define goals that improve upon current measures. It can be helpful to start with what is already measured in the areas you want to expand. This makes it easy to demonstrate a change from baseline.

- As your program expands and strengthens, define "far reaching" outcome goals that may not be currently measured, but are relevant to your vision. Consider outcomes of good ACP such as care concordance with wishes, reduction in distress for families, and referrals to palliative care or hospice.

Pilot ACP Expansion Projects

- Start where there are resources and relevance for ACP activities, in areas of your system that can more easily adopt and measure ACP activities.

- Empower those involved in ACP activities with solid tools and training. This can build buy-in and help ensure success and may cultivate additional champions.

- Take a team approach. Ensure that no single person, role, or discipline is solely responsible for ACP processes or activities. A team process with shared responsibility and workflows that are interdisciplinary can help your initiative be successful.

- Expect to identify challenges in your pilot projects. Leverage your team to refine models and adapt processes based on what you discover.

Identify Challenges and Questions

- Leverage your involved representatives across the system to identify and address challenges so you can keep moving forward.

- Anticipate challenges and use them as ways to continuously refine, improve and modify activities and processes across the system.

- Expect it to take time. Taking ACP system-wide can take several years, depending on the scope of your activities and system.

Five Wishes is available to provide guidance and support as you build your advance care planning program. Contact us and we will be happy to help ensure your success.

Consider Ways to Scale

- Think of different types of expansion across your system such as geography, departments or specialties, levels of care, clinical disciplines, or service lines. Scale up as you foster system-level buy-in and resources based on your pilot outcomes and refinements.

- Define core standards but allow flexibility in adapting workflows to decrease resistance. Adapt activities, processes and workflows as you scale so that they work for patients, practices, and everyone involved. Involve teams in testing and defining their own processes and workflows.

- Identify and celebrate examples of excellence throughout your system.

Five Wishes Practice Community
Elevating Advance Care Planning in Healthcare Systems

The Five Wishes Practice Community is a collaborative community of healthcare professionals who use the Five Wishes program for advance care planning. The goal of the practice community is to enhance your outcomes and elevate your practice through sharing best practice stories, resources, information, and more.

Membership is free, and available to any health professionals who use any components of the Five Wishes program.