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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AARP Maryland, the Maryland State Advisory Council on Quality Care at the End of Life, and the Horizon Foundation Encourage Families to Complete an Advance Directive on National Healthcare Decisions Day 2020

BALTIMORE (July 9, 2020) – AARP Maryland is hosting an expert panel presentation to help Marylanders discuss their end of life choices with loved ones and family members July 16, National Healthcare Decisions Day. *Advance Directives for You and Your Family* will premiere at 10 a.m. on AARP Maryland’s Facebook page (www.Facebook.com/aarpmid) and re-run on social media throughout the day, including YouTube. (www.YouTube.com/aarpmaryland).

The panel discussion will be led by AARP volunteer spokesman Ted Meyerson, and feature:

- Amy Tucci, President & CEO, Hospice Foundation Of America
- Dan Morhaim, M.D., Emergency Medicine Physician, Maryland State Legislator 1995-2019, Author "Preparing For A Better End," Hopkins Press (release fall 2020)
- Gene Ransom, Executive Director, Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi)

National Healthcare Decisions Day raises awareness about the need for all adults to complete an advance directive (“living will”) naming the person who will make medical decisions for them in the event they are seriously ill and cannot speak for themselves. The 2016 law establishing the day in Maryland notes that only about 30% of Marylanders have completed an advance directive.

“It’s understandable that people would put off discussing the topic of serious illness and death, but it’s essential to have this conversation in advance,” said Meyerson. “Families do not want to make these crucial decisions alone, without the input and guidance of their loved one. It’s a discussion that should take place in the living room, not in the hospital waiting room when it may be too late.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the importance of advance care planning into a new light,” said Nikki Highsmith Vernick, president and CEO of the Horizon Foundation. “We may not be able to predict every choice we’ll have to make in our lives, but we can give those we love the guiding principles to confidently make decisions for us in the event of a health care emergency. We offer residents the tools to start preparing – and to electronically name their health care agent – at speakeasyhoward.org.”

The National Healthcare Decisions Day website (www.nhdd.org) and the Office of the Attorney General (www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/HealthPolicy/advancedirectives.aspx) offer

Real Possibilities

resources to guide families through the process, including information on completing documents electronically and providing links to downloadable directives. Residents can complete these documents in their own homes and do not need to visit a lawyer or a notary – everyone should, however, share their documents with doctors, attorneys and loved ones to ensure their healthcare wishes are known and can be honored.

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