



We Need Your Help and Participation in Our Quality Improvement Project

We want to help people, your patients, think ahead and plan ahead for serious illness, like severe COVID infection. [Plan Well Guide](#) is a free, online, structured tool to help people prepare and plan for serious illness. Research has shown that patients expect their doctors to bring up this discussion, but most doctors do not because they feel the patient will not be ready and the conversation will be difficult and take too much time. This e-platform will address this.

The goal of this quality improvement project is to develop an efficient tool to enable family doctors to engage patients to do serious illness planning via [Plan Well Guide](#) and to use e-messages (automated electronic reminders) to help move the patient along in the planning process. Research confirms how e-messages are an effective way of helping people change their behavior and comply with health promotion/prevention requests, such as engaging in advance serious illness planning. We aim to build an electronic platform to facilitate these patient-doctor interactions and would value your participation in helping us recruit about 30 patients and test out our novel system over the next few months.

What is [Plan Well Guide](#)?

It is unlike any other advance care planning tools that may be used to help patients near or at the end of life! [Plan Well Guide](#) offers the following six major benefits to the patient or user:

1. Discriminates between planning for terminal care vs. planning for serious illness.
2. Explains how we make medical decisions under uncertain conditions.
3. Utilizes a values clarification tool where respondents must pick between competing values.
4. Uses 'Grids' to transparently connect the user's stated values to their preferences for medical treatments during serious illness.
5. Provides a 'first in class' decision aid on the different levels of care, with explanations about the difference between ICU, Medical and Comfort care, so participants understand the risks, benefits and outcomes of the type of treatments they are preferring.
6. The output of the planning process is a 'Dear Doctor' letter that enables your patients to more efficiently collaborate with you in developing their treatment goals and plans.

How Will [Plan Well Guide](#) Help You and Your Patients?

Research shows that the [Plan Well Guide](#) improves quality of serious illness decision-making and numerous patient outcomes, including:

- Greater satisfaction with decision-making
- Greater knowledge
- Reduced decision conflict
- Medical treatments more likely to be congruent with patient's values

At the same time, [Plan Well Guide](#) reduces the physician time and emotional burden of engaging their patients in these planning conversations.





How Recruitment Within the Project Works

The doctor or medical office assistant (MOA) will screen patients and invite (in person or by phone) patients in their practice they think could benefit from using this planning tool. They will briefly explain the nature of the program, collect their email and explain to them that an email from Plan Well Guide will come to them shortly. The MOA will then go to the Plan Well Guide e-platform (to be developed), register the site, enter both doctor information (name, office name and phone #) and patient name and email. The platform will then send an invitation letter to your patient and the process continues automatically from there. The patient will book an appointment with you after they are done the planning process to finalize the medical orders for the use of life-sustaining treatments (if applicable).

This whole program should take your patients no more than a maximum of 1-hour; this includes approximately 20-30 minutes to work through the guide online plus 10-15 minutes to discuss with you the contents of the "Dear Doctor" letter and/or translate these plans into a medical order for the use or non-use of life-sustaining treatments (MOST in BC, GCD in Alberta, etc.).

Participation is completely voluntary and there will not be any confidential health information disclosed or transmitted from your office to Plan Well Guide, except their name and email. If your patient declines the invitation, they will be asked a few short questions, so we can better understand why they were not interested as we hope to discuss any of their concerns and their serious illness plans at some point in the near future.

Additional Research & Information

A randomized trial of Plan Well Guide was recently published in CMAJ Open. The results showed that Plan Well Guide improves decisional quality, patient, and physician satisfaction, and reduces time physicians spend on their interactions with patients.

To read the full article visit the e-publication, here: <https://bit.ly/2W4nzLf>

For a visual summary of the results of the RCT, check out the Plan Well Guide infographic, [here](#) or visit our News page, [here](#), for additional information and articles highlighting the benefits of Plan Well Guide.

For more information and additional resources, visit the Plan Well Guide [Health Care Professionals Page](#).

If you have any questions at all about anything mentioned above or would like to participate in the project, please contact me directly at dkh2@queensu.ca.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in this important serious illness planning quality improvement project.

Sincerely,
Dr. Daren Heyland
Creator of Plan Well Guide