

## **Come Plan with Us: Desert Community Partners Inspire Full Lives & Meaningful Deaths**

The **purpose** of the Arizona End of Life Care Partnership (the Partnership) is simply stated:

*to fundamentally change the way our community thinks and talks about dying.*

Through the Partnership's efforts, we intend meaningful benefits to individuals and our community:

- Help people embrace their values and honor their lives by how they live and die;
- Transform the dying process into a personal and spiritual event, rather than a purely medical event.

**Design** of the initiative: the Partnership emerged from a previous coalition that had come together to help raise awareness of advance care planning. The impetus for the growth was intentional and substantial funding by two local foundations that provided the financial basis for a multi-year, community-wide effort. The United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona came on board as the anchor organization of the Partnership, providing guidance and cohesiveness to our diverse organization. Active partners include social service agencies, hospitals, community health clinics, tribal groups, hospices, and the University of Arizona Center on Aging.

**Population Served:** each partner plays a role in advancing end-of-life care planning in various segments of our community, such as healthcare providers, community residents, tribal communities, faith communities, the Hispanic community, and the LGBTQ+ community, among others. Our intent is to encourage everyone to reflect on their values, determine their wishes for care at the end of life, and to document and share their wishes.

**Outcomes:** in the first two years of the concerted Partnership effort, nearly 5,000 people have attended workshops, and 2,400 have reported completing their advance directives. In addition, workshop attendees overwhelmingly report—90+%-- that they have gained knowledge of advance care planning and increased confidence in discussing their wishes.

**Implications for practice:** faith communities are prime places to address issues of life and death, grounded in spiritual assurance and religious practices. Particularly, faith community nurses, health ministers, and clergy are in key positions to help their congregations integrate awareness of living and mortality into their communal life, as well as to encourage individuals and families in their advance care planning. This poster presentation will highlight the Partnership's effort in this area.