Documenting Wishes for Medical Care Helps Older Adults with Serious Illness Feel Like Their Wishes Are Followed and Their Family Members Know What They Want

Among family members of older adults with serious illness...

- **60%** report that their loved one has a document describing their wishes for medical care.
- **48%** know where it is.
- **22%** have referred to it.
- Nearly all who have referred to it say it was helpful.

Family members of older adults with serious illness are **much more likely to say they know exactly what sort of medical care their loved one wants** if they have a written document describing their wishes than if they don't.

- **53%** of family members of older adults with serious illness who have a written document say they know "exactly" what their loved one wants.
- **23%** of family members of older adults with serious illness who do not have a written document say they know "exactly" what their loved one wants.

Older adults with serious illness and their family members are **more likely to say their wishes are being followed** if they have a document describing their wishes for medical care than if they don't.

- **70%** of family members of older adults with serious illness who have a written document say their wishes are "very" closely followed.
- **54%** of family members of older adults with serious illness who do not have a written document say their wishes are "very" closely followed.

**SOURCE:** Kaiser Family Foundation Serious Illness in Late Life Survey, 2017

**NOTE:** For this survey, those who are seriously ill are older adults (65+) who have at least one of several chronic conditions and report functional limitations due to a health or memory problem.

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