



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Hospice Foundation of America to Organize
Public Awareness Campaign around Advance Care Planning
Grant from John and Wauna Harman Foundation to Fund Effort

The John and Wauna Harman Foundation (Harman Foundation) has selected Hospice Foundation of America (HFA) to sponsor and coordinate a public awareness campaign on the importance of talking about end-of-life preferences and goals with loved ones and medical professionals.

The project uses PBS's FRONTLINE film, "Being Mortal," to educate audiences and encourage people to take concrete steps to identify and communicate their wishes for end-of-life care. HFA will organize screenings of the documentary in communities nationwide to engage wide and diverse audiences, including both members of the public and clinicians, to spark reflection and discussion about the need for these sensitive conversations.

The screenings will be followed by a guided discussion. Screening Sites selected by HFA will be asked to partner with a community-based organization to increase community participation and ensure representation of *both* medical professionals and lay people. Screenings will begin later this year and continue through 2016.

Aired on PBS in February 2015, "Being Mortal" follows physician Atul Gawande as he thinks about death and dying in the context of being a healer. The renowned writer and Boston surgeon shares stories about experiences at the end of life from patients and his own family. Dr. Gawande published a national bestselling book by the same name. The Harman Foundation was an underwriter of the FRONTLINE film.

"While written advance care directives (ACDs) are important, the nuances of end-of-life care can't be captured in a checklist," said Julie Berrey, executive director of the Harman Foundation. "Discussing deeply-held personal values and what matters most at the end of life *before* a serious illness occurs helps make shared decision-making easier for patients and families when a loved one faces a severe illness, especially in the absence of formal ACDs or when a patient can no longer participate in the discussion."

Seventy percent of Americans say they would prefer to die at home, but nearly 70 percent die in hospitals and institutions. Ninety percent of Americans know they *should* have conversations about end-of-life care, yet only 30 percent have done so.

To help close this gap, the Harman Foundation and the California HealthCare Foundation collaborated in 2015 to promote viewing and discussion of “Being Mortal” by Californians through support of over 65 screenings in communities throughout the state. The effort was a huge success, with public interest far exceeding expectations and resulting in the decision to expand the effort nationally.

“We’re honored to partner with the Harman Foundation on this important national project at the grassroots level,” said Thomas J. Spulak, chairman of HFA’s board of directors. “Anyone who has seen ‘Being Mortal’ knows the important message it sends about end-of-life discussions and awareness. HFA’s experience in community-based education will enable it to fully support local screening sites to hold engaging community events.”

For more information contact Amy Tucci, HFA, atucci@hospicefoundation.org or 1-800-854-3402.

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About the John and Wauna Harman Foundation

The John and Wauna Harman Foundation (Harman Foundation) is a private family foundation rooted in its donors’ humble beginnings. Thus, the Harman Foundation values humility, compassion, education, and a concern for the most vulnerable in our society. Its mission is to improve end-of-life care in America by encouraging all Americans to have meaningful conversations with family and loved ones about their end-of-life care wishes *before* serious illness occurs, thereby improving quality of life as death is near.

About HFA

Hospice Foundation of America is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. HFA meets its mission by providing programs for professional development, public education and information; funding research, producing publications, and by providing information on issues related to hospice and end-of-life care. Our programs for healthcare professionals are designed to improve care of those with terminal illness and those experiencing the process of grief, and are offered on a national basis. Our programs for the public are designed to assist individual consumers of health care who are coping with issues of caregiving, terminal illness, and grief.