

There are many things in life that are out of our hands. Examples are serious illness or injury. At such times, decisions may be required on our behalf, but due to the circumstances, we are not able to make those decisions for ourself.

The Five Wishes Program helps individuals to prepare for these situations.

Five Wishes is the first living will that talks about your personal, emotional and spiritual needs, as well as your medical wishes, according to the Aging With Dignity organization that developed the program.

The following five wishes form the framework of this program:

- The person I want to make care decisions for me when I can't
- The kind of medical treatment I want or don't want
- How comfortable I want to be
- How I want people to treat me
- What I want my loved ones to know

The Five Wishes Program began with a man named Jim Towey who worked with Mother Teresa for 12 years and lived in a hospice run by her in Washington D.C.

Inspired by this experience, Towey sought a way for patients and their families to plan ahead to cope with serious illness. The result was the Five Wishes Program.

Five Wishes is for anyone 18 or older, married or single, parents, adult children and friends. Over eight million Americans of all ages have already used it.

There are 40 states and the District of Columbia where the Five Wishes Program substantially meets state requirements under the law. Nebraska is one of those states.

For anyone who would like a free copy of the Five Wishes booklet, which provides information and necessary forms, they are available from the admissions office at Chase County Community Hospital.

Additional information on Five Wishes can be found by accessing the Aging With Dignity website at www.agingwithdignity.org.