

More online advance directives completed during COVID-19

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(HealthDay)—There has been an increase in completion of advance

directives (ADs) during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a research letter published online July 20 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Catherine L. Auriemma, M.D., from the Palliative and Advanced Illness Research Center at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and colleagues conducted a prospective cohort study of users of OurCareWishes.org, designed to guide patients and families through [advance care planning](#) (ACP). Monthly rates of AD completion, number of goal-setting modules completed, and distributions of preferences for care were assessed during the pre-COVID-19 period (Jan. 1, 2019, to Jan. 31, 2020) and the COVID-19 period (Feb. 1 to April 30, 2020).

The researchers identified 424 users during the pre-COVID-19 period, with a median of 26, five, and 31 monthly new users, returning users, and total users, respectively. The corresponding medians were 133, 21, and 154 during the COVID-19 period, with a total of 482 users. These numbers represented a 4.9-fold increase in monthly users. During COVID-19, completion rates increased for five of nine optional modules (identifying goals of care, important end-of-life priorities, health state ratings, [organ donation](#), and wishes for one's final days).

"The increased demand for AD documentation might be explained by an increased sense of AD importance owing to COVID-19-induced hospital visitation restrictions, calls for clinicians to promote ACP, or because COVID-19 has provided new motivation for patients who have long wanted to complete ADs but previously failed to do so," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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