

Pro Bono Committee Report

Chair: Jennifer Wright

Members: Alice Berquist, Pook Grathwol, Mary Kaczorek, Greg Marita,

The newly constituted Pro Bono Committee has begun work on planning for National Healthcare Decisions Day on April 16. On January 30, the Committee met with people from Hospice Minnesota, Minnesota Justice Foundation, William Mitchell Elder Law Society, Allina, OutFront Minnesota, SMRLS, and the Interprofessional Center for Counseling and Legal Services, to plan the state efforts for NHDD. Announcements calling for volunteers have gone out on the Probate and Trust Law and the Health Law section listservs. Articles regarding NHDD have appeared in the Elder Law section ENewsletter. The Committee and its allies will be selecting the best available informational materials and putting together a complete public education packet for site sponsors. We are drafting a description of the program and an invitation to sponsor events on April 16. This invitation will be widely distributed among social workers, nurses, doctors, chaplains, gerontologists and lawyers throughout the state. Those who wish to sponsor a NHDD event will receive information and support from the Committee, including a referral source for clients who wish to consult one-on-one with a professional to complete an advance directive after considering the information offered at one of the April 16 events. At some sites, individual help in completing the advance directive will be available on the day of the event – the William Mitchell students' group is developing a model for these events. The Committee is asking that each event have professionals available from two of the above professions to provide information about advance directives and answer general questions. We will assist sponsors in finding an interprofessional partner if they do not already have one lined up. The Committee will also be doing statewide publicity about NHDD. This project is an excellent start for the Committee, providing many opportunities for Elder Law section members to provide pro bono services, and allowing the Committee to build links with a wide variety of organizations serving the elderly.