

## Mom Knows Her End-Of-Life Wishes Will Be Respected

By Amy Hamane

Community First

Bernadette Roberts had already undergone two surgeries and was scheduled to undergo a serious procedure on Oahu. Daughter Puna Azevedo was stressed. In desperation, she reached out to her friend, Keola Kenoi-Okajima, at the Hawaii County Office of Aging. "I have to take Mom to Oahu for a serious procedure next week and I'm so worried about what to do if something unexpected happens," Azevedo said. "I'm her primary caregiver. Does that make me responsible for making decisions about her medical care?" Kenoi-Okajima and lead planner Clayton Honma met with Azevedo that same day and recommended she take her mother to Community First's Advance Health Care Directive workshop the next day.

Azevedo said, "There's four of us daughters and we all love our mom, but we didn't know what our mom's wishes were. I urged my sisters, Pua Carriaga and Pomai Roberts, to go with me to the workshop. Our other sister, Kala Branco, was on the mainland. None of us knew anything about advance health care directives and none of us had ever talked to Mom about end-of-life care. "Community First's workshop was just what we needed! Mom listened attentively and we all learned why an AHCD is so important, not just for Mom but for all of us. It's difficult to talk about end-of-life medical issues, especially with our mother. She may feel pressure to respond how she thinks we want her to respond, or that we may not all agree on what we think she needs."

According to Carriaga, "It really took the pressure off my sister, Puna. It allowed all of us to understand that whatever Mom chooses and whomever she chooses to represent her wishes is her choice. We felt good because it was Mom making her own decisions and we learned what kind of end-of-life care she wants. All we would need to do is support and carry out her decision."

"The Community First volunteers are incredible," she added. "They provide a very informative session which is not pushy or intrusive. They presented the different options and explained what those options meant regarding Mom's future health care choices. Thankfully, I'm able to report that Mom's procedure on Oahu went well."

According to Charlene Iboshi, chairperson of Community First's AHCD committee, "This is the ideal situation. Mom, Bernadette Roberts, was accompanied by her daughters and they all heard our presentation together and could talk to each other about a difficult but important subject, end-of-life medical care. Mom completed her AHCD, had the conversation with her loved ones and she knows that her end-of-life wishes will be respected."

Since COVID-19 prevents us from doing in-person workshops, our monthly workshops will be using the Zoom app for the rest of the year. A June participant said, "I wasn't familiar with Zoom, but it worked! Got all my questions and concerns addressed." Our next workshop will be

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from 3-4 p.m. on Aug. 13, and we encourage families like the Robert's family to gather in their homes in a special Sunday afternoon Zoom workshop from 3-4 p.m. on Sept. 20. To participate in our Zoom workshop, participants will need an iPad/tablet, computer or smartphone. We have volunteers who will assist those who need help with the Zoom process, and there is no fee.

We will provide a step-by-step explanation on how to complete an advance health care directive. As an optional service, Community First will also provide a drive-through follow-up for those who participate in our workshop. Our volunteers will check and witness the completed AHCD and provide five free copies so participants can immediately distribute them to their loved ones and medical providers.

To register, go online to [CommunityFirstHawaii.org/registration](https://CommunityFirstHawaii.org/registration) or call Amy Hamane at 935-1500 or Rosemary Burnett at 987-4405.