



AWARD



NATIONAL USA WEEK

Celebrating the Lives and Contributions of **U**nmarried and **S**ingle **A**mericans



Outstanding Public Service by an Organization Partnership for Caring Nonprofit Corporation

The American Association for Single People is pleased to present this award for Outstanding Public Service by an Organization to Partnership for Caring, Inc of Washington, DC.

When it comes to decision making in medical crisis, the law provides an automatic safety net for people who are married. A spouse has authority to make medical decisions for, have access to the records of, and to visit a married partner who is mentally incapacitated. But the same is not true for unmarried adults.

While medical personnel are supposed to cooperate with "next of kin" in a medical crisis, they must be located and then a decision must be made as to which relative should have priority. What if several close relatives are identified and they disagree as to a course of treatment? What if blood relatives are at odds with a long-term unmarried life partner of the patient?

The law in all states allows an adult to execute various "advance directives" stating his or her wishes about medical treatment and who should have authority and priority to make decisions on his or her behalf. But most unmarried people do not have such documents, oftentimes out of ignorance about them or the financial inability to hire a lawyer to prepare them.

Partnership for Caring is a nonprofit organization which encourages all people to execute advance directives. The necessary forms, and instructions, are available over its website and are also available in printed form through the mail. By doing this research and providing these materials to anyone in need, Partnership for Caring is commended for its outstanding public service which greatly benefits unmarried medical consumers.

September 19, 2004

Thomas F. Coleman
Executive Director

