Kidney disease support group for men

A message to men living with kidney disease: you are not alone, register now to help support one another.

The Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) invites men living with kidney disease to register their interest in a men’s only kidney disease support group.

Social worker, John Buchanan said one Australian dies with kidney related disease every 25 minutes; that's 16 times the road toll.

“Everyone’s kidney disease journey is different, and many of the men living with kidney disease have said that talking with others who are experiencing a similar journey is incredibly helpful,” Mr Buchanan said.

“We are looking to deliver a monthly support group for men that will provide emotional support in a welcoming environment where men can share their unique journey, their feelings and concerns; and learn from one another.”

To register your interest in a monthly, men’s only kidney disease support group please contact John Buchanan by calling 5436 8552 or emailing john.buchanan@health.qld.gov.au

Peter Kolanowski was diagnosed with kidney disease seven years ago, dialysing at home for about 11.5 months before receiving a kidney transplant in October 2010.

“Because of the kidney transplant, I no longer have kidney disease, however now I need constant monitoring of the medications and their side effects, and ongoing tests to monitor the health and performance of the transplanted kidney,” Mr Kolanowski said.

“I feel that being part of a men's support group is important because I can answer questions that only someone who has gone through it can answer, like ‘what's it like on a dialysis machine?’ and ‘how did it feel after the transplant?’

“It is always encouraging to speak to someone who has been on the same journey and come out the other end of the tunnel,” he said.

Shane Butler was first diagnosed with kidney disease eight years ago, and knows the struggles of living with kidney disease.

Having undergone full dialysis for three years, Shane received a kidney transplant on 11 October 2016.
“The hardest things about living with kidney disease is the reduction in quality of life, the fatigue and shortness of breath, not being able to do the things I could in the past, and feeling that I am inferior in the eyes of others,” Shane said.

“I’d love to see a support group for men living with kidney disease; it would be a great opportunity to talk about things that you might not feel you could share with clinical staff or your partner,” he said.

In the Sunshine Coast and Gympie region, the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service treats about 160 people with dialysis and another 170 rely on a kidney transplant. The health service regularly sees more than 500 different patients each year with chronic kidney disease not yet on dialysis, and many more are managed in the community.