

Media statement

16 May 2019

National Palliative Care Week: What matters most?

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) will be holding a free public event on loss, grief and community support for families, as part of National Palliative Care Week (May 19 – 25).

The Specialist Palliative Care team will hold a Community Discussion event, **'You Can't Ask That'**, which is an opportunity to talk with professionals from a number of areas about death and dying. Discussion topics will include advance care planning, carer support, self-care, spirituality at death and palliative care in the home.

The free event will be held on **Thursday 23 May at the Caloundra RSL from 10:00am – 11:30am**, during National Palliative Care Week.

The week's theme is 'What Matters Most?' which asks Australians to reflect on what would be most important to them if they became seriously unwell.

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service's Palliative Care Clinical Director Dr Louise Welch says it is important to have discussions with loved ones about the end of their lives and the type of care they would like to receive if they could no longer speak for themselves.

"By having a conversation with loved ones and health professionals, people can ensure their treatment and care best aligns with their values and preferences. It allows for delicate discussions about death and dying, and what would matter most to them during this difficult time" Dr Welch said.

"Discussing end of life wishes can be a challenging conversation, which is why we encourage the community to use the "Dying to Talk" Resources available from the Palliative Care Australia website," Dr Welch said.

"Demand for palliative care is increasing. It is incredibly important that we provide support not only for our patients, but also health professionals, such as GP's to help discuss the palliative care approach with patients while they are well," she said.

The Productivity Commission's recent report into human services found between 80,000 and 140,000 of the 160,000 people who die each year in Australia could benefit from high-quality end-of-life care.

Palliative care is available to all people with a serious illness and their families, to assist in managing their symptoms and improve their quality of life.

Sunshine Coast

Hospital and Health Service

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For more information on the SCHHS National Palliative Care Community Discussion event email SC-Palliative-Care@health.qld.gov.au or call 07 5436 8800.

For more information on National Palliative Care Week: <http://palliativecare.org.au/national-palliative-care-week> or download the Dying to Talk Discussion Starter www.dyingtotalk.org.au

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