

CAMPAIGN TO GRANT AUSTRALIANS THEIR DYING WISH

Queenslanders are being denied their dying wish because they leave it too late to put their end-of-life plans in place, doctors have warned.

A new Australian Medical Association (AMA) Queensland campaign called *Fifty over Fifty* aims to have 50 per cent of all Queenslanders aged over 50 establish an Advanced Health Directive (AHD) by 2022.

An AHD, sometimes called a living will, details your future healthcare choices to ensure families and doctors can carry out your dying wishes.

AMA Queensland President Dr Dilip Dhupelia said while 70 per cent of Australians wanted to die at home, only about 14 per cent were able toⁱ because they did not have an AHD.

“This adds a lot of extra pressure on family members who are trying to make decisions on behalf of a loved one during a very difficult time,” Dr Dhupelia said.

Dr Dhupelia said the *Fifty over Fifty* campaign, launched to coincide with National Advanced Care Planning Week April 1 – 5, aimed to encourage people to tackle the taboo topic of death with their loved ones and GP.

“Most people needing palliative care services in Queensland will be treated by their GP and it’s important your regular doctor knows what you want, so they can respect your wishes,” he said.

“Firstly, however, we need to have conversations with our family and loved ones to ensure our end-of-life wishes are known and can be carried out when the time comes. Then your GP can help create an AHD.”

Dr Dhupelia called on the State Government to launch a public education campaign to help Queenslanders feel more comfortable about discussing death and end-of-life.

Palliative Care Queensland CEO Shyla Mills said because people were living longer, we were all more likely to have to deal with a dying relative.

“It used to be the case that your great-grandparent or grandparent died when you were very young, if not before you were born, but now it’s quite common for us to witness and be involved in their end of life,” Ms Mills said.

Find more information about making an AHD here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tg3fYjLy-Os&index=2&list=PL3C5Ab4L_H8UNV9YOMFxFxYJGh9Se1HtVVP

ⁱ Swerissen, H and Ducktt, S., 2014, Dying Well. Grattan Institute