

6 August 2018

Dying to Know Day (8 August) start the conversation

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) is encouraging community members to have a conversation on Dying to Know Day (8 August) to talk about end of life planning.

ISLHD End of Life Care Coordinator and clinical nurse consultant, Joanne Davis said talking about dying never killed anyone.

“It may not happen for a very long time, but everyone will eventually die. And one of the kindest things you will ever do is to share your thoughts with people you love, so that they can honour your wishes when you are getting close to death,” Ms Davis said.

As the End of Life Care Coordinator Ms Davis works mostly with clinical teams to get them thinking about the needs of patients. On 8 August Ms Davis is inviting community members to attend a morning tea at the Wollongong Hospital Loftus Street foyer to have conversations around death, dying and bereavement.

“It is important to try to get people in the community speaking to their family and friends, as well as their health care providers about their thoughts around dying,” Ms Davis said.

“On Dying to Know Day I am hoping people will drop in, and be served a cuppa and a scrumptious cupcake by one of our helpers in our café style set up.

“Guests will be offered a Dying to Know Day postcard and asked to simply write down what would be important to them at the end of their life. They can then place these into special boxes placed in the foyer which I will collate and share with our medical teams. A similar event will be held for our staff later in the day,” she said.

“I’d love to see people bring family and friends with them to start a conversation that can be continued over time, in the privacy of their home. Unless you talk about what you want, no-one will know.”

Information about writing an Advance Care Directive will also be available on the day. An Advance Care Directive, also known as a living will, personal directive, advance directive, medical directive or advance decision, is a legal document in which a person specifies what actions should be taken for their health if they are no longer able to make decisions for themselves because of illness or incapacity.

The free community morning tea is from 10am-12pm on Wednesday, 8 August 2018 in the foyer of Wollongong Hospital, Loftus Street entrance.

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

Media contact: Media and Corporate Communications Unit

Phone: 4221 6862 or 0477 391 219 | Afterhours: 0422 003 764 | website: www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au

healthdirect AUSTRALIA – providing expert health advice 24 hours a day to NSW residents – Tel. 1800 022 222