

16th April 2014

Have A Conversation That Counts Today!

April 16th is “Conversations that Count Day” - a national awareness day to encourage people to think, talk about and plan for their future health and end of life care.

This process – known as “Advance Care Planning” - is important for health care providers, individuals and their families and loved ones, as it enables an understanding of a persons wishes for their future health care provision, what matters to them, and what makes life meaningful to them.

Once developed, an advance care plan can be stored along side a patients medical records, making it easier for health professionals to make treatment and care decisions about their patients, especially when they are unable to speak for themselves.

16th April is the first time this national day has been held in New Zealand and to help kiwis get behind “Conversations That Count Day”, a series of online and printed postcards have been created to help people to talk with their friends and families about this important matter. People are being encouraged to visit the website www.conversationthatcount.org.nz and download and send postcards to their friends and family members to help them to ‘start the conversation.’

The day is being coordinated by the National Advance Care Planning co-operative which has over 800 members from many organisations across New Zealand. Events and talks are also being held across the country by nurses, GPs and other health professionals who are increasingly being trained in this important area.

The South Island Alliance is a member of the co-operative working to support the promotion of Advance Care Planning across the South Island through its Health of Older People Service Level Alliance (HOPSLA). Jenny Keightley, Canterbury-based GP and Chair of HOPSLA says “*we recognise how important it is for people living with chronic health conditions and progressive illnesses to have the opportunity to discuss their health care options for the future and to express their own values and choices during conversations with doctors and nurses about their treatment.*”

“Through HOPSLA, South Island DHBs are working together to achieve standardised documentation for advance care planning and to ensure that dedicated training is made available to health professionals across the South Island to support more widespread use of this important tool.”

To find out more or to send someone you care about a postcard by email visit www.conversationthatcount.org.nz, or visit the CTC facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/friends/requests/?fref=rup#!/Conversationthatcount>