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NATIONAL PALLIATIVE CARE WEEK 2016
Living Well with Chronic Illness

AMA Vice President, Dr Stephen Parnis, today encouraged people living with chronic illness to consider seeking access to palliative care services for pain relief and symptom management.

Next week, 22-28 May, is National Palliative Care Week 2016, which carries the theme, *Living Well with Chronic Illness*, and the objective is promoting broader access to palliative care.

“While most people who access palliative care have cancer, many with chronic illnesses can also benefit from the services it provides, including pain and symptom management,” Dr Parnis said.

“The AMA strongly supports Palliative Care Australia’s key message that ‘talking about dying won’t kill you’, and I encourage all Australians to start that conversation with family, friends, and their medical professionals.

“The AMA advocates that advance care planning should become part of routine clinical practice so that patients’ wishes for health care, particularly end of life care, are known and met. This includes people living with chronic illness.

“Advance care planning can be part of a health care discussion with patients of all ages within the primary care environment or hospital setting.”

Advance care planning is a process of planning for future health and personal care whereby the person's values, beliefs, and preferences are made known so they can guide decision-making at a future time when that person cannot make or communicate his or her own decisions.

The AMA’s Position Statement on End of Life Care and Advance Care Planning can be read here: <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/end-life-care-and-advance-care-planning-2014>

The AMA also supports exciting new initiatives to promote end of life discussions, including the Death Over Dinner campaign, where friends and family get together to discuss their choices on end of life care over dinner, before a crisis arises.

Dr Parnis is an ambassador for Death Over Dinner, and attended the Death Over Dinner Event at Melbourne Town Hall last night.

For more information on National Palliative Care Week 2016, go to <http://palliativecare.org.au/national-palliative-care-week/>

For more information about Death Over Dinner, go to <http://deathoverdinner.org.au/>

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