

**Australian Medical Association Limited**

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604  
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499  
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**PLAN AHEAD FOR VITAL END-OF-LIFE CARE DECISIONS**

*National Advance Care Planning Week 2019, 1-5 April*

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, today urged all Australians to discuss and plan their future health care wishes with their family and loved ones well ahead of the time when age, illness, or impairment could make it difficult to make informed decisions about their own health.

This week, 1-5 April, is National Advance Care Planning Week, an initiative of Advance Care Planning Australia, with the theme, ‘No Plan. No Voice. No Choice’.

“Everyone, regardless of their current age or health status, should make their future health care preferences known,” Dr Bartone said.

“Advance care planning eases the very real situation faced by many individuals when they are at their most vulnerable and may have lost their decision-making capacity at the end of life.

“An advance care plan sets out their wishes or goals of care to those who must make healthcare decisions on their behalf.

“Without a plan, they have no voice to guide those decisions and no choice as to what decisions are made for them. They lose control of their destiny, and place the burdens of decision-making on their loved ones, which can be a legacy of guilt on families that extends after their death.

“Advance care planning discussions should become a key part of routine healthcare conversations across Australia,” Dr Bartone said.

**Background**

- An advance care plan can be recorded in a variety of ways, including an advance care directive, medical enduring power-of-attorney, a letter, an entry in your medical record, or even a verbal instruction.
- If you already have an advance care plan in place, National Advance Care Planning Week is the perfect opportunity to revisit it to ensure it continues to reflect your preferences and goals of care, which may change as you get older or as a serious health condition progresses.
- Your GP can assist with the planning process by discussing your current and possible future health situations, helping you to clearly articulate your preferences, and regularly reviewing your advance care plan with you.
- Always ensure you alert your GP and substitute decision-makers to the existence of your advance care plan and any changes in your plan.

The AMA's *Position Statement on End of Life Care and Advance Care Planning 2014* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/end-life-care-and-advance-care-planning-2014>

The Advance Care Planning Australia website is at <https://www.advancecareplanning.org.au>

1 April 2019

CONTACT: John Flannery 02 6270 5477 / 0419 494 761  
 Maria Hawthorne 02 6270 5478 / 0427 209 753