

Dementia planning resource a step ahead

Calls for a new national approach to advance care planning for people with dementia have already been heeded by not-for-profit aged care organisation ACH Group.

ACH Group has promoted the benefits of planning ahead for five years since it launched its Planning Ahead Guide for customers in South Australia and Victoria.

An updated version of the guide was released in August last year to include instructions on the new Advanced Care Directive.

Research released this month by the NHMRC Cognitive Decline Partnership Centre and Hammond Care found more needed to be done to ensure the voices of people living with dementia are heard in decisions affecting lifestyle, financial issues, care and health. (Read the report at <http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/cdpc/resources/advance-planning.php>)

It follows modelling released

last month by the University of Canberra's National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling that predicted a doubling in the number of people affected by dementia by 2050, from 380,000 to almost one million.

ACH Group Dementia Learning and Development Unit Senior Manager Lenore de la Perelle says the easy-to-use Guide helps older people, people with dementia and their families to have the conversation about advance care needs and documenting their wishes for the future.

"It can be a sensitive topic of conversation, but this Guide provides a very useful way of ensuring that wishes are respected," she says.

"Dementia, stroke, serious accidents and some other health conditions can affect our ability to make decisions for ourselves. Our Guide gives an opportunity to have a say in your future and gives clear information to assist with



what can be difficult decisions and discussions to face."

The Guide explains the new Advanced Care Directive document and the decisions it covers, including choices and instructions for personal wishes, future medical care and end-of-life decisions. It also covers services, emergency planning, financial planning and an Enduring Power of Attorney document.

ACH Group is also developing a Planning Ahead Advisory Service to accompany the Guide for people who would like more information on their own planning ahead process.

The Guide is available free to download via <http://www.ach.org.au/planning-ahead-download> or phone ACH Group on 1300 224 477.