

## In the Q: Successful Kick-Off for Speak Up Series



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After many months of planning by the MedQuarter Faith and Medicine Task Force, which focuses on bringing the topic of end-of-life planning to the forefront, the Speak Up series on end-of-life planning kicked off October 5 to a crowd of over 270 people at First Lutheran Church!

Dr. BJ Miller, nationally-renowned speaker and triple amputee, presented *Facing Life* – a message about understanding different types of suffering; how the healthcare system could be improved by focusing on healing rather than curing; and that illness, disability, aging and dying are normal to the human condition. With these insights framed, Dr. Miller went on to explain the importance of each person taking action, being their own advocate, learning their options, choosing what is important to them, communicating and documenting these choices, and living a quality life to the end.

The audience was extremely appreciative of Dr. Miller's message, which was followed by a question & answer session. From attendee surveys completed by a majority of attendees following the event, we learned that the percentage of people who currently have advance directives is correlated to the age group: 75% of the 66+ group, 57% of the 50-65 group, 33% for the 26-55 group and 0% of the <25 group. With this information, we know that our goal of engaging the community in end-of-life planning is truly needed.

Prior to the evening presentation, Dr. Miller met with 22 area professionals representing medical, faith, legal and higher education organizations to facilitate a group discussion on ways to engage the community on end-of-life issues.



The consensus of the group was that it will take a multi-faceted approach to bring about any real change in the current system and that this will need to be a patient-driven initiative. The group will reconvene in early 2018, after the three Speak Up series events are over, to begin developing the next action steps.

There are two more Speak Up series events to be held in 2017:

**November 2 - Medical and Legal Decisions** with Cedar Rapids physician Dr. William Galbraith and attorney and award-winning author Jo Kline, J.D.

**December 7th – Spiritual Perspectives** with a panel of Christian, Humanist, Jewish and Muslim leaders participating in a discussion about how personal values affect end-of-life planning.

Visit [www.themedquarter.com/speakup](http://www.themedquarter.com/speakup) for more information. Please join us for these important community conversations!