

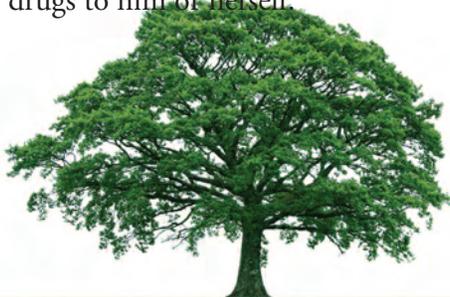
WHO CAN RECEIVE LIFE-ENDING MEDICATION?

A person qualified to receive life-ending medication must meet the following criteria:

- A Washington resident;
- A competent adult (18 years or older);
- Is diagnosed with a terminal illness;
- Is medically predicted to die within six months; and,
- Is able to take the medication by him or herself, without help.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR LIFE-ENDING MEDICATION?

- The patient must make one written and two oral requests.
- There must be a waiting period between requests.
- Two physicians must diagnose the patient with a terminal illness and determine the patient competent.
- If required, a counseling referral must be submitted.
- The physician must verify the patient is making an informed decision.
- The patient must have the opportunity to rescind (withdraw) his or her request.
- Only the patient may administer the drugs to him or herself.



RESOURCES AND MORE INFORMATION

- **Washington State Department of Health**
(800) 525-0127
www.doh.wa.gov/dwda
- **Washington State Hospital Association**
www.wsha.org
- **Washington State Medical Association**
www.wsma.org
- **Washington State Hospice & Palliative Care Organization**
www.wshpco.org/index.cfm
- **National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization**
www.nhpco.org
- **Compassion & Choices in Dying**
www.candcofwa.org
- **Caring Connections**
www.caringinfo.org

Brochure prepared by
the Washington State Hospital Association
and The Risk Management and Patient Safety Institute



Washington
State
Hospital
Association



THE RISK MANAGEMENT AND
PATIENT SAFETY INSTITUTE

THE WASHINGTON STATE DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT

INFORMATION
FOR PATIENTS



SUMMARY OF THE DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT

The Death with Dignity Act (Revised Code of Washington 70.245) allows competent, terminally ill adults seeking to end their life to request lethal doses of medication from medical and osteopathic physicians. These terminally ill patients must be Washington residents who have less than six months to live.

ALTERNATIVES TO LIFE-ENDING MEDICATION

If you are thinking about taking life-ending medication, talk with your doctor. There are many options for end-of-life care; life-ending medication is only one of them. Your doctor can also tell you about end of life treatment and care, pain management, hospice care, palliative care, comfort care and other options for treatment. Your doctor can also connect you with resources for psychological or spiritual support.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. How do I ask for life-ending medication?

Your doctor must receive one written and two oral requests from you for life-ending medication.

2. Does my written request for life-ending medication need to be witnessed?

Your written request must be witnessed by two people.

3. Does my family have to know that I have asked for life-ending medication?

No, but your doctor will ask you to talk to your family about your decision.

4. Who can write a prescription for life-ending medication?

Only a doctor licensed in Washington State can write a prescription for life-ending medication in this state.

5. Does my doctor have to prescribe life-ending medication?

No, your doctor may choose not to write a prescription for life-ending medication.

6. Will my doctor refer me to another physician who will prescribe a life-ending medication?

Your doctor can choose whether or not to write a referral to another physician for life-ending medication.

7. What happens if I am admitted to the hospital and I am considering life-ending medication?

Hospitals may choose not to allow patients to use life-ending medication. Contact your hospital prior to admission to find out if it has a policy on patient use of life-ending medication.

8. If I take life-ending medication, will it impact my life insurance?

Taking life-ending medication will not impact your life insurance.

9. How do I get additional information on the Death with Dignity Act?

The Washington State Department of Health provides information, FAQ's, and forms on its web site at www.doh.wa.gov/dwda or you may contact them by phone at (800) 525-0127.

