



THE WASHINGTON DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT AN OVERVIEW FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES

An End of Life Washington volunteer can help you navigate this process, locate physicians who are willing to honor your choice, and be present at the time of death, should you request it. Please call End of Life Washington early in your terminal diagnosis so that you have time to complete this process.

Eligibility:

- ◆ Must be an adult Washington State resident.
- ◆ Diagnosed by a physician as terminally ill, with disease or condition that will cause death within six months.
- ◆ Capable of making an informed decision, not impaired by mental illness, dementia, or depression.
- ◆ Able to self-administer the prescribed dose of life-ending medication.

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING LIFE-ENDING MEDICATION:

1. Ask your primary care physician or specialist if he/she will support your decision to obtain life-ending medication and write the prescription. The physician who writes your prescription is called the “Attending Physician.” If he/she declines, ask if he/she would be your Consulting Physician.
2. Make a first oral request for the Death with Dignity Act (DWDA) prescription. Ask your physician, even if he/she has declined to participate in DWDA, to document your first oral request in your medical record.
3. You must have two physicians: an Attending (prescribing) Physician and a Consulting Physician to confirm your diagnosis, prognosis, and mental capacity.
4. After you have seen both the Attending and Consulting Physicians, complete a *Written Request for Medication* form. This form must be signed by two qualified witnesses. One witness can be a family member; one can be an employee of your doctor; or both witnesses can be bystanders. When the form is completed, give it to your Attending Physician.
5. Make a second oral request to the Attending Physician, no sooner than 15 days after the first oral request, and ask your Attending Physician to document your request in the medical record.
6. As long as 48 hours have passed since you provided your *Written Request for Medication* to the Attending Physician, you may obtain the prescribed medication(s) from a pharmacy recommended by End of Life Washington. You or someone you designate may pick up the prescription. You can leave the prescription on file with the pharmacy for up to six months, until you are ready to fill it (check with the pharmacist).

Recommendations to Clients:

- ◆ When you have a life expectancy of six months or less, request a referral to hospice from your physician.
- ◆ Complete your Will, Health Care Directive, Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, and Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form.
- ◆ Talk to your loved ones about your decision.
- ◆ Keep your decision private and only share it with your inner circle of family and friends. If you do talk about it, please do not reveal the identities of participating physicians and pharmacists.