The Facts About Medical Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill

Medical Aid in Dying laws provide the option for terminally ill, mentally capable adults to end their life when and where they choose by requesting a prescription. The laws define a strict, voluntary process with multiple safeguards.

All of the laws in the U.S. are similar and modeled on the Oregon Death with Dignity Act passed in 1994, the first MAID law in the U.S. The safeguards of these laws have proven effective. Not a single case of abuse or coercion has ever been filed.

Medical Aid in Dying laws are referred to by the acronym MAID and also known as Death with Dignity laws. In the U.S., these laws always apply only to adults with terminal illnesses.

Medical Aid In Dying is optional. It is optional for patients and healthcare providers. No person is required to use it and no doctor is mandated to prescribe the medication. All healthcare providers may opt-out of participation.

There are strict eligibility requirements. A patient must be an adult, have six months or less to live, be able to make an informed healthcare decision and be able to take the medication themselves. Two doctors must agree that the patient is mentally capable of making the decision.

The patient is in control. Only the patient can request the prescription. The patient must be able to take the medication unaided. They can change their mind at any time and choose not to take it.

Patients are protected by more than a dozen safeguards. Two doctors must confirm that the patient has six months or less to live — due to a terminal illness, not because of age or disability. Two doctors and two independent witnesses must confirm that no coercion exists.

It improves end of life care. Evidence shows that palliative or comfort care gets better for patients and families in states with medical aid in dying. The vast majority of patients who have obtained a prescription were also using hospice care.

The laws are administered on a state level. These jurisdictions have passed MAID laws: Oregon, Washington, Vermont, Maine, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Hawai‘i, and New Jersey. Medical aid in dying is allowed through a court ruling in Montana.

Medical Aid in Dying can provide comfort and control when a patient is facing the uncertainties and suffering of a terminal illness. Patients report that just having this option relieves fear and anxiety — even for those who never choose it.

www.OhioOptions.org
Ohio End of Life Options’ mission is to raise awareness, provide education, and advocate for a medical aid in dying law in Ohio. But our efforts go beyond passing a law. The coalitions we are building now will be in place to provide support for those who choose to participate in the law in the future, patients and healthcare professionals alike.

Through conversations and research we know that people want this option in Ohio.

“I still have so much left to do. I want to live my life until I can’t for another moment. I want quality for as long as I can have it. I have been in control of the way I lead my life, I believe I should have control over my death.”

“It is as important to choose the way we die as it is to choose the way we live.”

_Pamela Gredicak has been living with cancer since 2009. Columbus, OH._

“Look folks, this is going to creep up on you and shake you by the shoulders. It does not have to be you, but it could be a friend, or a loved one or relative. Everybody’s going to go through it. When it gets to that point at the end of life, you have to be ready.”

_Death with dignity is about having a choice, having control._

_Bob Gellatly and daughter Lauren. He died January 26, 2018. Newton Falls, OH._

Ohio Voters Support Medical Aid in Dying Legislation

SUPPORT AMONG OHIO VOTERS

FAVOR 69%

OPPOSE 28%

Not Sure 3%

SUPPORT AMONG RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Protestant

Catholic

Jewish

Some Other Religion

Don't Care to Say