



www.coendoflifeoptions.org
888-905-4033

The "Colorado End-of-life Options Act" (Act) establishes eligibility criteria and core safeguards for a terminally ill adult to request medication to self-administer that brings about a peaceful death. To be eligible for aid-in-dying medication, two doctors must determine that an individual is a terminally ill adult with a prognosis of six months or less to live and is mentally capable of making his or her own healthcare decisions. The terminally ill adult must make two oral requests and one written request to his or her attending physician, receive information about hospice and other end-of-life options for care, and be able to administer the medication to themselves. A terminally ill adult who requests aid-in-dying medication may withdraw their request at any time or choose not to take the medication.

Facts about the Colorado End-of-Life Options Act

- The Colorado End-of-Life Options Act is a statutory amendment and does not change the Colorado constitution.
- To be eligible a person must be diagnosed with a terminal illness that is likely to cause death in six months. The diagnosis must be confirmed by a second physician.
- To be eligible a person must be 18 years or older.
- To be eligible a person must be a legal resident of Colorado.
- To be eligible a person must be mentally capable of making an informed decision. If either physician has concerns about the person's ability to make an informed decision, a psychiatric or psychological evaluation is required and the medication may not be prescribed without written confirmation from the psychiatrist or psychologist that the person is mentally capable of making informed decisions.
- To be eligible a person must make two verbal requests with a 15-day minimum waiting period in between each request. A third written request must be made in writing in front of two witnesses. At least one witness cannot be related by blood, marriage, adoption or civil union, and cannot stand to gain financially from the person's death.
- The aid-in-dying medication must be self-administered.
- The person must be informed about safe-keeping and proper disposal of any unused medication and unused medication must be disposed of in accordance with Federal take-back programs.
- The act grants immunity from civil and criminal liability and from professional discipline to a healthcare provider or any other person who participates in good faith under the Act.
- No healthcare provider or any other person is required to participate.
- An insurance company cannot deny payment or coverage on health, life or annuity policy because a person is eligible for the law.
- The proposed law does not authorize assisted suicide, euthanasia, mercy killing or lethal injection.
- Coercing or putting undue pressure on a person to request, receive, or take aid-in-dying medication or tampering with aid-in-dying documents is a felony.



Changes from the 2016 legislation

- In the initiative, physicians are required to keep dispensing records and report prescriptions to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (“The Department”).
- The Department is required to publish annual statistics. However, individual medical records are private and not publicly available.
- In the initiative, the definition of Mental Health Professional is limited to only psychiatrists and psychologists.
- In the initiative, either the physician who writes the prescription or the Hospice Medical Director must sign the death certificate and the cause of death will be listed as the underlying illness (per best practice established in Oregon and Washington). Using the law does not trigger an automatic coroners investigation.
- In the initiative, healthcare providers who feel uncomfortable discussing aid in dying with their patients are not mandated to counsel them about the availability of the option upon a terminal diagnosis.

Polling

- 2014 Strategies 360 - 62% support; 28% oppose
- 2015 Colorado Statewide Omnipoll survey – 68% support; 28% oppose
- 2016 Colorado Statewide Omnipoll survey- 65% support; 24% oppose

Oregon Death with Dignity annual reports

Visit: www.healthoregon.org/dwd

- During 2015, 218 people received prescriptions for aid-in-dying medication under the provisions of the Oregon DWDA.
- As of January 27, 2016, the Oregon Public Health Division had received reports of 132 people who had died during 2015 from ingesting the medications prescribed under the Oregon Death with Dignity Act.
- Since the law was passed in 1997, a total of 1,545 people have had prescriptions written under the DWDA, and 991 patients have used the medication; 554 did not use the medication.