

POLICY TITLE Death With Dignity Policy	POLICY NUMBER WA.HP.1-031
ACCOUNTABLE DEPARTMENT Kaiser Permanente Washington – Home Health and Hospice	EFFECTIVE DATE 02/05/2024
DOCUMENT OWNER Hospice Quality/Compliance Specialist	PAGE 1 of 2
APPROVAL BODY/COMMITTEE Director, Operations Home Health and Hospice	DATE APPROVED 02/05/2024

1.0 Policy Statement

Kaiser Permanente of Washington (KPWA) acknowledges the rights and responsibilities under the Washington State Death with Dignity (DWD) Act.

2.0 Purpose

This policy outlines staff participation under the Washington State DWD Act when acting in a role under KPWA’s Hospice agency.

3.0 Scope/Coverage

This policy applies to all individuals who are employed by the following entities (collectively referred to as “Kaiser Permanente” specifically assigned to the Home Health and Hospice Department:

- 3.1** Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Inc. (KFHP);
- 3.2** Kaiser Foundation Hospitals (KFH);
- 3.3** All contractors, vendors, volunteers, students, or other persons, who are KP workforce members, while performing functions or services for or on behalf of KFH, KFHP and/or the PMGs (individually, a “KP entity”).

4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 Life ending medications** - medications prescribed to a qualified patient under the Washington State Death with Dignity (DWD) Act for self-administration by the qualified patient for the purpose of ending his or her life in accordance with the DWD Act.
- 4.2 Qualified patient** - a patient who meets all the criteria under the Washington State Death with Dignity (DWD) Act and who has performed all of the requisite steps required under the DWD Act in order to obtain a prescription for life ending medications pursuant to the DWD Act.

5.0 Provisions

- 5.1 Provision 1:** KPWA hospice interdisciplinary team members, including physicians, are expected to respond to questions about Death with Dignity with respect and compassion. No patient will be denied other medical care or treatment because of the patient’s inquiry or participation with the KPWA DWD program and/or resources in the community.
- 5.2 Provision 2:** KPWA hospice interdisciplinary team members, including physicians, will provide all ordinary care routinely delivered to patients on hospice regardless of their participation in DWD.

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- 5.3 Provision 3:** KPWA hospice physicians may discuss DWD as a treatment option for terminally ill patients and provide resources about the DWD program in the community and at KPWA.
- 5.4 Provision 4:** KPWA hospice physicians may fulfill the DWD attending role, the DWD consulting role or may abstain completely from participation for any reason. Hospice physicians will never be obligated to participate in DWD.
- 5.5 Provision 5:** KPWA hospice interdisciplinary team members, including physicians, may, at their option, be present when patients who elect DWD take the life ending prescriptions.
- 5.6 Provision 6:** KPWA hospice interdisciplinary team members, including physicians, may not: 1. Facilitate the physical delivery of life ending medications to a patient’s residence, or 2. Assist patients in preparing their life ending prescriptions, or 3. Assist patients in ingesting life ending medications.
- 5.7 Provision 7:** Patients on hospice services will be provided access to resources for Death With Dignity (DWD) / Medical Aid In Dying (MAID) upon request. If a request is received, they will be advised to contact the Death with Dignity/MAID Program Coordinator via the following referral routes:
- Email:** dwdkpwa@kp.org Please provide name, date of birth, and contact information.
Referral Line: 1-866-897-5797 This is a secure line. Please leave a message with your name, date of birth, and return number.
- 5.8 Provision 8:** If any policy changes are made, the revised policy will be submitted to the Washington Department of Health within 30 days of policy approval.

6.0 References

6.1 References

- 6.1.1** Kaiser Permanente of Washington Death with Dignity Program Resources: [Death with Dignity Program Practice Resources - WA | WA Clinical Library \(kp.org\)](#)
- 6.1.2** End of Life Washington: [EOLWA AP Packet-May-2022.pdf \(endoflifewa.org\)](#)
- 6.1.3** Washington State Legislature: [Chapter 70.245 RCW: THE WASHINGTON DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT](#)
- 6.1.4** Washington State Department of Health Death With Dignity FAQ: [Frequently Asked Questions About Death With Dignity | Washington State Department of Health](#)