



Hospice Medical Aid in Dying

SCOPE:

This Policy applies to WhidbeyHealth Hospice.

PURPOSE:

To define the responsibility of WhidbeyHealth Hospice to patients who choose to use Medical Aid in Dying, also known as Death with Dignity Act (RCW 70.245), while under the care of WhidbeyHealth Hospice.

DEFINITIONS:

RCW 70.245 is titled the “Death with Dignity Act”. To be eligible for Medical Aid in Dying, a patient must be an adult, a Washington state resident, and determined to be terminally ill by a qualified medical provider. RCW 70.245 allows terminally ill patients to end their lives through the voluntary self-administration of lethal medications expressly prescribed by a provider for that purpose.

Attending Provider means the qualified medical provider who has primary responsibility for the care of the patient and treatment of the patient’s terminal disease.

Consulting Provider means a medical provider who is qualified by specialty or experience to make a professional diagnosis and prognosis regarding the patient’s disease.

POLICY:

General Statement:

WhidbeyHealth Hospice respects the end-of-life choices of our patients. We support the rights of Washington State residents who are eligible for Medical Aid in Dying to end their lives through self-administration of life-ending medications. WhidbeyHealth

Hospice provides education and guidance to our patients who are exploring options according to RCW 70.245.

Physician Participation:

The WhidbeyHealth Hospice Medical Director (Hospice MD) may discuss RCW 70.245 with the patient and family. The Hospice MD may serve in the role of “Consulting” or “Attending” provider. These duties include a review of the patient’s medical records confirming the diagnosis and prognosis, evaluating the patient, reviewing the risks, benefits, and alternatives to Medical Aid in Dying, and ensuring the patient has both capacity and voluntary decision making.

WhidbeyHealth Hospice Employee Participation:

WhidbeyHealth employees will provide support and guidance to patients who are considering or who have elected to use Medical Aid in Dying. WhidbeyHealth Hospice does not require any Hospice employee to be present for patient self-administration of a life-ending dose of medication. If the patient requests the presence of a WhidbeyHealth Hospice employee during self-administration of the medication, and the employee is willing to be present, then the employee may be present. The WhidbeyHealth Hospice employee, if present, will not participate in preparing or administering the life ending medication.

Financial Considerations:

WhidbeyHealth Hospice will not be responsible for any of the costs associated with Medical Aid in Dying. This includes any fees for the Attending or Consulting provider visits. WhidbeyHealth will not provide or cover the cost of the life-ending medication.

EXTERNAL REFERENCES:

Laws/Regulations:

1. WAC 246-978 Death with Dignity Act Requirements
2. RCW 70.245 The Washington Death with Dignity Act