Policy

2. Under Washington law, a health care provider, including Lincoln Hospital District #3 is not required to assist a qualified patient in ending that patient’s life.
3. Lincoln Hospital District #3 has chosen to not participate under the Death with Dignity Act, hereinafter, the Act. This means that in the performance of their duties, Lincoln Hospital District #3 physicians, employees, independent contractors and volunteers shall not assist a patient in ending the patient’s life under the Act. In addition, no provider may participate under the Act on the premises of the hospital or in the property owned by the hospital.
4. No patient will be denied other medical care or treatment because of the patient’s participation under the Act. The patient will be treated in the same manner as all other Lincoln Hospital District #3 patients’. The appropriate standard of care will be followed.
5. No patient will be denied other medical care or otherwise discriminated against based upon whether or not the patient has executed an advanced directive. The patient will be treated in the same manner as all other Lincoln Hospital District #3 patients’. The appropriate standard of care will be followed.
6. The Provider will maintain close communication with the family and keep them updated regarding patient’s status.
7. Lincoln Hospital District #3 encourages rituals per patient/family customs/culture/spirituality.
8. If possible, may consider use of a “Comfort Care Room.”
9. If possible, establish a plan to prevent the person from dying alone, such as having the family, staff, or a volunteer be with the patient.
10. Any patient wishing to receive life-ending medication while a patient at this hospital will be assisted in transfer to another facility or Licensed Medical Provider of the patient’s choice. The transfer will assure continuity of care.
11. All providers at Lincoln Hospital District #3 are expected to respond to any patient’s query about life-ending medication with openness and compassion. Lincoln Hospital District #3 believes our providers have an obligation to openly discuss the patient’s concerns, unmet needs, feelings, and desires about the dying process. Providers should seek to learn the meaning behind the patient’s questions and help the patient understand the range of available options, including but not limited to comfort care, hospice care,
and pain control. Ultimately, Lincoln Hospital District #3’s goal is to help patients make informed decisions about end-of-life care.

Procedure

1. If, as a result of learning that Lincoln Hospital District #3’s decision not to participate in the Act, the patient wishes to have care transferred to another hospital or Licensed Medical Provider, then Lincoln Hospital District #3 staff will assist in making arrangements for the transfer by checking facility web sites. If the patient wishes to remain at Lincoln Hospital District #3, staff will discuss what end of life care will be provided consistent with hospital policy.

2. If a patient requests a referral to a physician who will fully participate under the Act or expresses the desire to take medication that will result in the patient’s death, the provider may provide the patient with a referral, or may instruct the patient that he or she must find a participating provider on his or her own. The relevant medical records will be transferred to the physician taking over the patient’s care per hospital policy. The patient’s primary clinical care giver and or on call Provider will be responsible for informing the patient’s attending physician as soon as possible.

3. Nothing in this policy prevents a physician or provider from making an initial determination that the patient has a terminal disease and informing the patient of the medical prognosis.

4. Nothing in this policy prevents a physician or provider from providing information about the “Washington State Death with Dignity Act” (see attached) to a patient when the patient requests the information.

5. Nothing in this policy prohibits a physician who is employed by or who is an independent contractor of Lincoln Hospital District #3 from participating under the Act when not functioning within the scope of his or her capacity as an employee or independent contractor of Lincoln Hospital District #3.

Sanctions

If a provider participates in the Act beyond what is allowed by hospital policy, Lincoln Hospital District #3 may impose sanctions on that provider. Lincoln Hospital District #3 shall follow due process provided for by the appropriate reviewing body.

Public Notice

Lincoln Hospital District #3 will provide public notice of this policy in the following ways: posting the policy about the hospital’s stance on the Act on the hospital’s web page.

1 “Qualified patient” means an adult person who is a patient diagnosed in writing to have a terminal condition by the patient’s attending physician, who has personally examined the patient, or a patient who is diagnosed in writing to be in a permanent unconscious condition in accordance with accepted medical standards by two physicians, one of whom is the patient’s attending physician, and both of whom have personally examined the patient.

2 Please see the Natural Death Act providing legal authority for a Provider’s moral or ethical objection to participation with the Death with Dignity Act.