

**POLICY: MEDICAL AID IN DYING**

**AUTHORITY: WAC 246-978**



**PURPOSE:**

The philosophy and mission statement of Hospice of Spokane guides how we care for patients at the end-of-life. Our philosophy states the final stages of life are as important as all other stages, deserving presence, respect, and dignity as well as freedom of choice. Hospice of Spokane's mission embraces its role as a model of excellence in end-of-life care. We specifically spell out that our mission affirms life and intends to neither hasten nor prolong death.

This philosophy and mission guide our policy on medical aid in dying. We respect a patient's freedom of choice but balance that with our mission of neither hastening nor prolonging death.

Washington state passed the Washington Death with Dignity Act on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008. This act allows terminally ill patients to end their life by taking medications prescribed by a provider. The patient must be a competent adult who is a Washington resident suffering from a terminal illness that will lead to death within six months.

**PROCEDURE:**

Hospice of Spokane respects a patient's choice to make their own health care decisions regarding treatment but must balance this against our mission of neither hastening nor prolonging death. In patients who are exploring or pursuing medical aid in dying utilizing the Washington Death with Dignity Act we support their decision but will not actively participate as a consulting provider or in writing prescriptions to cause a patient's death.

We will support a patient's decision:

- Provide information and contact information for organizations (End of Life Washington) so the patient can make an informed decision
- Provide information on providers who may participate as a consulting or prescribing physician in our community
- Continue with medical, social, and spiritual support of the patient as they explore their options or participate in medical aid in dying
- Attend the patient after death and provide bereavement services to the patient's family

Reviewed by: Leadership

Reviewed, Revised, Approved 0923

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We will not be an active participant in medical aid in dying:

- Providers contracted with Hospice of Spokane in the course of their duties will not act as the consulting or prescribing providers for the patient participating in medical aid in dying
- Patients will be asked to contact the prescribing provider for any questions or complications regarding medications used in medical aid in dying
- Staff members or volunteers will not in any way assist with preparation or administration of the lethal medication, nor encourage, nor discourage its ultimate use
- Staff members and volunteers will not be present in the home or facility for the patient's self administration of the medication to end their life
- Ingestion of lethal medication is not allowed at the Hospice House
- We will ask that the death certificate be sent to the prescribing provider to complete if the patient's death is the result of taking the prescribed medications

Hospice of Spokane is committed to treating patients with compassion and dignity at the end-of-life. We believe this policy balances our philosophy of allowing patients control and choice at end-of-life with our mission of neither hastening nor prolonging death. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact Hospice of Spokane at (509)456-0438.

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## Hospice Policies Regarding the Washington State Death with Dignity Act

In accordance with SB 5179 (Laws of 2023), the purpose of this form is to provide the public with information about which Death with Dignity Act-related services are and are not generally available at each hospice agency.  
**Please contact the hospice agency directly if you have questions about services that are available.**

Hospice name: Hospice of Spokane

Physical address: 121 S. Arthur St.

City: Spokane

State: WA

Zip Code: 99202

Hospice contact: Gina Drummond, CEO

Contact phone#: 5094560438

### Washington State Death with Dignity (DWD) Act

Pursuant to the DWD Act, RCW 70.245.190, individual providers, staff, and facilities may choose whether or not to participate in the DWD Act. "Participate" means to perform the duties of the attending (prescribing) qualified medical provider, the consulting qualified medical provider, or to take part in other activities as described below.

All hospice agencies provide symptom management and after-death support.

The items below describe the above-listed hospice agency's provision of specific DWD Act-related support.

#### Medical Provider Participation in DWD Act

- o For any given patient, Hospice medical providers may participate as both Attending (prescribing) and Consulting providers.
- o For any given patient, Hospice medical providers may participate as either Attending (prescribing) or Consulting provider, but not both.
- o Hospice medical providers may participate as Consulting providers only.
- !!\ Hospice medical providers do not participate as either Attending (prescribing) or Consulting providers.

#### Hospice Staff/Volunteer Presence During Ingestion

- o Hospice staff/volunteers may be present in the patient room at the time of ingestion.
- o Hospice staff/volunteers may not be present in the patient room at the time of ingestion but may be present in the patient residence at time of ingestion.
- !!\ Hospice staff/volunteers may not be present in the patient residence at the time of ingestion.

#### Hospice Staff/Volunteer Presence Following Ingestion

- o As above, Hospice staff/volunteers may be present during ingestion, and may also be present following ingestion.
- !!\ Hospice staff/volunteers may be present only after ingestion.
- !!\ Hospice staff/volunteers may be present only after the patient has died.

#### Hospice Staff/Volunteer Medication Transport

- o Hospice staff/volunteers may transport DWD Act medications from the pharmacy to the patient's residence.
- !!\ Hospice staff/volunteers may not transport DWD Act medications from the pharmacy to the patient's residence.

#### Hospice Staff/Volunteer Witnessing of Written Request

- o Hospice staff/volunteers may witness a patient's written request for medication that the patient may self-administer to end their life.
- !!\ Hospice staff/volunteers may not witness a patient's written request for medication that the patient may self-administer to end their life.

#### Hospice Staff/Volunteer Medication Preparation

- o Hospice staff/volunteers may assist with medication preparation for a patient to self-administer.
- !!\ Hospice staff/volunteers may not assist with medication preparation.

#### Hospice Staff Placement of Rectal Catheter for Purpose of Administration of DWD Medications

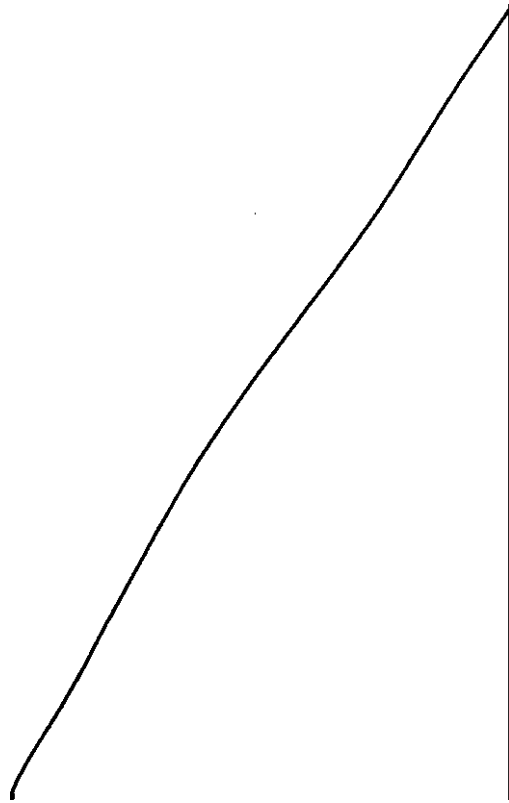
- o If necessary, Hospice staff may place a rectal catheter for the purpose of self-administration of DWD medications.
- !!\ Hospice staff may not place a rectal catheter for the purpose of self-administration of DWD medications.
- o **Please see next page for additional comments.**

Signature: *d c ) ' j*

Signed by: *(=, ' . b*

Date: *1?- 1'5 - 2."2i*

Comments; limitations on services; other services continued:



Signature:

Signed by:

Gina Drummond

Date:

2-15-23

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