

Arizona End-of-Life Options



Your life. Your death. Your choice.

ABOUT US: We are an all-volunteer, nonpartisan, nonsectarian grassroots coalition dedicated to passage of a state law allowing terminally ill residents to obtain prescription medications that eliminate undue suffering at the end of life and assure a dignified, peaceful passing. Our purpose, goals and proposed legislation are modeled after our highly respected national partners: Death with Dignity and Compassion & Choices. The end-of-life practice we endorse is called medical aid in dying (MAID).

FAQ:

Do other states have such laws? Yes, nine states and the District of Columbia currently have MAID laws in place (often called Death with Dignity laws). They include Oregon, Washington, Vermont, California, Colorado, Maine, Hawaii, Montana, and New Jersey, plus D.C. That means this basic human right is already extended to some 70 million Americans. It also means Arizona is playing catch-up.

Who is eligible for medical aid in dying? In states where necessary laws have been passed, MAID is available to any adult deemed to be terminally ill (six months or less to live), who is able to make informed decisions and is capable of ingesting the prescription “cocktail” on their own.

Isn't this the same as assisted suicide? No, not at all. That is an antiquated and misleading description that we are trying to eradicate, although some opposition groups persist in using the term because it is inherently defamatory. By definition, assisted suicide requires the aid of another person, which is a criminal act throughout the U.S. MAID gives patients autonomy. They request the medication. They take it. And they can change their mind at any time.

What about legal and medical safeguards? The legislation includes more than a dozen safeguards: two doctors must confirm the six-month terminal illness, two independent witnesses must confirm that the patient is of sound mind, and there is a 17-day waiting period between the first request and your doctor writing the prescription. And these safeguards work quite effectively; in the 25 years since the first Death with Dignity law was passed in Oregon, no civil or criminal charges have been filed related to MAID.

Is there wide support for MAID? Yes, and the numbers just keep growing. Here are some current statistics:

- Worldwide, there are 38 right-to-die organizations in 23 different countries.
- 67% of all faiths believe that, “When a person is facing a painful terminal disease, it is morally acceptable to ask for a physician’s aid in taking his or her own life.”
- 57% of physicians support the practice.
- 62% of doctors in states where MAID is not legal report having had a patient who wished they could have exercised that right.
- 71% of Americans believe, “It is more important to enhance the quality of life for seriously ill patients, even if it means a shorter life.”

For more information, visit www.ChoicesArizona.org or call Dr. Dwight Moore, 360-223-4958.