



Care and Choice at the End of Life

Volunteer Action Network Toolkit:

A GUIDE TO VOLUNTEER ADVOCACY

Approved for Public Distribution

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Introduction	3
Support for the End-of-Life Options Movement	4
How to Talk About Medical Aid in Dying	6
Chapter 1: Communicating With Your Legislators and the Media	9
Key Message Points to Include in All Communications	10
Writing a Letter to the Editor	10
Commenting Online	12
Writing Letters to Lawmakers	13
Chapter 2: Petitions, Tabling and Canvassing	16
Petitions: Grassroots Activism 101	17
Tabling: Bringing Medical Aid-in-Dying Issues to the Community	19
Canvassing: Taking the Show on the Road	21
Chapter 3: Basic Lobbying	23
Step One: Writing Letters to Public Officials	24
Step Two: Preparing for a Legislative Meeting	24
Step Three: Appearing at a Legislative Committee Hearing	26
Step Four: Holding a Lobby Day	27
Chapter 4: Passing a Local Resolution	28
Do Your Research	29
What Is a Local Resolution?	30
Getting a Local Resolution Passed	31
Chapter 5: Holding a “How to Die in Oregon” Screening	34
What Do I Need to Host a Screening?	35
How Much of the Film Should I Show?	37
Managing the Conversation	37
Follow Up	38
Chapter 6: Holding a House Party	39
Host Commitments	40
Getting People to Your Party	40
Creating Your Invitation	41
Selecting a Presentation/Discussion Topic	42
Hosting a Remote Speaker	43

Screening a Video	43
Running Your House Party	43
Making the Ask for Support	44
After the Event	45
Frequently Asked Questions About Hosting a House Party	45
Appendix	48
Resources for Petitions and Tabling	49
Resources for Drafting a Local Resolution	50
Resources for Hosting a Screening	52

Compassion & Choices is the nation’s oldest, largest and most active nonprofit working to improve care and expand options for the end of life. For more than 40 years we have sought to change attitudes, practices and policies so that everyone can access the information and care they need. Compassion & Choices is committed to collaborating with legislators from every state and political party who seek to honor their constituents by engaging in this mission with us.



Care and Choice at the End of Life

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Volunteers are at the heart of Compassion & Choices' advocacy, education and outreach efforts, paving the way for a full range of end-of-life options nationwide. Our success hinges on the generous participation of supporters like you — volunteers from around the country who contribute their skills and time to make a difference.

The guidance provided in the following chapters will help you match your interests and talents with the most impactful actions you can take as a Compassion & Choices volunteer. Particular attention has been given to resources to help you engage with your state and local governments and elected officials. Our step-by-step instructions take the guesswork out of what can be a complicated system and helps you make a direct impact. Read on for information, guidance, best practices and tips to help you engage the media, hold fundraising events and even host movie screenings!

Support for the End-of-Life Options Movement

It's important that your local officials, media and potential supporters understand that medical aid in dying commands long-term, bipartisan majority support among voters nationwide. In 2017 a Gallup poll put national support for medical aid in dying at 73%¹, which is consistent with other recent national and state results such as a 2016 LifeWay Research online survey that put medical aid in dying at 67% support².

Majority support for medical aid in dying has been broadly reliable across a range of questions and demographics. Among California voters, significant majorities support medical aid in dying in every subgroup, including 72% among Hispanics, 60% among African-Americans and 74% among Asian-Pacific Islanders³. In 2015, a poll of voters across New York state found support for the option of medical aid in dying was 77% (and 75% among Catholics); when more details of pending legislation in the state were provided, support went up to 4 out of 5 voters wanting that legislation to succeed (including 81% of self-identified conservatives)⁴.

¹ Physician-Assisted Death: Where Do You Stand? January 12, 2017. Available from: <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/874341>

² American Views on Assisted Suicide, Lifeway Research, September, 2016. Available from: <http://lifewayresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Sept-2016-American-Views-Assisted-Suicide.pdf>










³ Periyakoil, V. MD, Kraemer, H. PhD, and Neri, E. MS. Multi-Ethnic Attitudes Toward Physician-Assisted Death in California and Hawaii. *The Journal of Palliative Medicine*. June 2016. Available from <http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1089/jpm.2016.0160>

⁴ New York Statewide Survey, Key Findings. Eagle Point Strategies, LLC. September 2015. Available from <https://www.compassionandchoices.org/userfiles/NY-EPS-Poll-background-10.6.15.pdf>

KEY FACT:

Nearly 7 in 10 Americans agreed that individuals who are terminally ill, in great pain and who have no chance for recovery, have the right to a peaceful death.

National Polls **State Polls**

	2014 74% Support Aid in Dying	2015 NEW YORK 77% Support Aid in Dying	Eagle Point Strategies
	2015 68% Support Aid in Dying	2015 NEW JERSEY 63% Support Aid in Dying	
	2016 59% of Christians Support Aid in Dying	2015 MARYLAND 60% Support Aid in Dying	
	70% of Americans of Other Religions Support Aid in Dying	2015 CONNECTICUT 63% Support Aid in Dying	
	2016 57% of Doctors Support Aid in Dying	2015 CALIFORNIA 69% Support Aid in Dying	
	2017 73% Support Aid in Dying	2016 HAWAII 80% Support Aid in Dying	

How to Talk About Medical Aid in Dying

This section contains some important facts and examples of how best to answer some common questions about medical aid in dying. Pay close attention to the language that is being used. Compassion & Choices has found over many years that the way you talk about medical aid in dying makes a big difference in how well the listener understands and reacts to the issue.

ELEVATOR PITCH:

Medical aid in dying is an urgent issue for terminally ill people who cannot wait for relief from unbearable suffering in their final days. Without this option, many will suffer needlessly when they could instead die peacefully.

Majority of Doctors Support Medical Aid in Dying

Many leading national professional medical associations support medical aid in dying because it empowers physicians to respect their patients' wishes. The American Public Health Association, the American College of Legal Medicine, the American Medical Women's Association and the American Medical Student Association support open access to medical aid in dying. Also, a highly reliable [Medscape poll](#) of U.S. physicians in December 2016 found a majority (57%) of doctors now support medical aid in dying⁵.

Significantly, after reviewing the California End of Life Option Act, the state's medical association (the largest in the nation) decided to take a neutral position on medical aid-in-dying legislation. In a press release the California Medical Association said, "We believe it is up to the individual physician and their patient to decide voluntarily whether the End of Life Option Act is something in which they want to engage. Protecting that physician-patient relationship is essential⁶."

Medical Aid in Dying Is Not Suicide or Assisted Suicide

Factually and legally, medical aid in dying is *not* suicide or assisted suicide. It is critical to accurately describe medical aid in dying as one end-of-life option that dying people can access to end their suffering. People who use medical aid in dying are of sound mind and want to live, but a terminal disease is killing them; they use medical aid in dying to end an unbearable and inevitable dying process.

⁵ Medscape Ethics Report 2016: Life, Death, and Pain, December 23, 2016. Available from: <http://www.medscape.com/features/slideshow/ethics2016-part2#page=2>

⁶ California Medical Association. Excerpted from: CMA changes stance on physician aid in dying, takes neutral position on End of Life Option Act. June 2, 2015. Available at <http://www.cmanet.org/news/detail/?article=cma-changes-stance-on-physician-aid-in-dying>

Many have publicly expressed that the term is hurtful and derogatory to them and their loved ones. Many medical groups agree and have adopted the more accurate and neutral term medical aid in dying.

State legislatures and courts in states where the practice is authorized recognize medical aid in dying as differing from suicide, assisted suicide or euthanasia. Euthanasia and assisted suicide are both illegal in jurisdictions where medical aid in dying is authorized. Medical aid-in-dying laws on the books in California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Oregon, Vermont and Washington expressly state: “Actions taken in accordance with [the Act] shall not, for any purpose, constitute suicide, assisted suicide, mercy killing or homicide.”

Faith

The choice of whether to pursue medical aid in dying is an intensely personal decision, and one individual’s beliefs or faith should not limit another’s right to choose the end-of-life medical option best for them and their families. As such, no faith leader will ever be required to participate in the medical aid-in-dying process. A faith leader may be asked for spiritual or emotional support, but this medical practice involves a dying person and their healthcare providers only. Freedom of religion as it relates to medical aid in dying means that everyone should be allowed to make their own decisions about end-of-life care grounded in their own faith and beliefs.

Notable religious leaders have spoken out in favor of medical aid in dying. Their advocacy demonstrates that their support is rooted in their faith and not in spite of it.

[Archbishop Desmond Tutu](#) expounded, “I have been fortunate to spend my life working for dignity for the living. Now I wish to apply my mind to the issue of dignity for the dying. I revere the sanctity of life — but not at any cost ... People should die a decent death. For me that means having had the conversations with those I have crossed with in life and being at peace. It means being able to say goodbye to loved ones — if possible, at home⁷.”

Similarly, retired [Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson](#) reasoned, “There is nothing innately good about allowing ‘nature’ to take its course in a prolonged and painful journey to an inevitable death. It doesn’t make you a better person because you endured the indignity and trauma of it. You don’t get extra stars for it ... Shouldn’t the right to end one’s life also be provided for those [terminally ill people] who would choose it⁸?”

⁷ Smith, D. & Boffey, D. Desmond Tutu plea for ‘assisted dying’ before historic Lords debate. The Guardian, The Observer, July 12, 2014. Available from <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/jul/12/desmond-tutu-assisted-dying-right-to-die-nel-son-mandela/print>

⁸ Bishop Gene Robinson, On Her Own Terms: Why Brittany Maynard Has Chosen to Die. The Daily Beast, October 12, 2014. <https://www.thedailybeast.com/on-her-own-terms-why-brittany-maynard-has-chosen-to-die>

Many dying people who consider using the option say that praying about the decision brought them closer to God, just as conversations about the decision brought them together as a family, and they view that intimacy as a miracle in and of itself. Remember, an inclusive approach is always best. Our country is built on respect for religious diversity. You should never be dismissive of or combative with faith communities.

Protecting People Who Are Vulnerable

There is simply no evidence or data to support any claim that medical aid-in-dying laws are subject to abuse. A report published in the [Journal of Medical Ethics](#) about the Oregon Death With Dignity Act concluded: “Rates of assisted dying in Oregon showed no evidence of heightened risk for ... the physically disabled or chronically ill.”⁹ In fact, there has not been a single documented case of abuse or misuse related to existing medical aid-in-dying laws, and no one has ever been charged with a crime.

Since the implementation of the law in 1997, the Oregon Health Authority has collected comprehensive data about the implementation of the Death With Dignity Act. Two decades of annual reports, as well as a host of medical articles and other resources, are posted online¹⁰.

Gene Hughes, a disability rights advocate from New York, sums up his support of medical aid in dying thusly, “We cannot advocate for the rights of people living with disabilities to be able to make their own choices and healthcare decisions during life, only to deny those freedoms at the end of life. I believe much of the objection to medical aid in dying is driven by fear and misunderstanding. Dying is a part of living.”

Respecting the Wishes of Others

Medical aid-in-dying legislation is about bringing options to people at the end of life. Many people support medical aid in dying without knowing whether they would use it for themselves because they feel it is right to respect the wishes of others.

California Governor Jerry Brown, a Jesuit Catholic who in 2015 signed the state’s medical aid-in-dying bill into law, said in a memo, “I do not know what I would do if I were dying in prolonged and excruciating pain. I am certain, however, that it would be a comfort to be able to consider the options afforded by the bill. And I wouldn’t deny that right to others.”¹¹

⁹ Battin MP, van der Heide A, Ganzini L, *et al* Legal physician-assisted dying in Oregon and the Netherlands: evidence concerning the impact on patients in “vulnerable” groups *Journal of Medical Ethics* 2007;33:591-597.

¹⁰ Compassion & Choices. *Compassionandchoices.org*.
<https://www.compassionandchoices.org/financial-information/>

¹¹ Gov. Jerry Brown. Office of the Governor, Oct. 5, 2015.
https://www.gov.ca.gov/docs/ABX2_15_Signing_Message.pdf



Care and Choice at the End of Life

Chapter 1:

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS AND THE MEDIA

Chapter 1: Communicating With Your Legislators and the Media

Having a core team of volunteers who contact lawmakers, post online, write letters to the editor and take other actions in support of the medical aid-in-dying movement is *critical* to our success in the legislatures, the courts and in public opinion.

Writing letters may sound a bit old fashioned in the age of social media, but we call it “*Activism 101*.” Writing letters is still one of the best ways to register your support for (or opposition to) a piece of public policy, or contribute to the conversation with a letter to the editor, which virtually all media outlets publish regularly. This brief guide offers you some basic ideas and best practices for writing letters to the editor, as well as to your local, state and federal elected officials.

Key Message Points to Include in All Communications

All communications in support of medical aid in dying — whether on social media or in letters to the editor or public officials — should stress the importance of access to the full spectrum of end-of-life options by making one or more of the following points:

- 1. *Choices about end-of-life treatments and options should be left to the individual***, their family and their doctor. Their decisions should be guided by medical standards and a medical process, not the whims of politicians or religious leaders.
- 2. *Public support for end-of-life options is consistently strong*** — in red states, in blue states, across demographic groups and religions; this strong support has held steady for two decades.
- 3. *Medical aid in dying is not suicide or euthanasia***. The person accessing medical aid in dying is already dying due to their underlying illness. Neither the physician nor the medication are causing the death, rather they are helping the person find a peaceful end to their suffering.

Writing a Letter to the Editor

Letters to the editor help educate people in your community about the importance of medical aid in dying and demonstrate constituent support for end-of-life options to lawmakers. A well-written, timely letter can shift public opinion, build consensus and influence policy.

So What Should I Write About?

You might write a letter in response to an article, either agreeing or disagreeing. Or you can write about a major policy development, community event or other noteworthy happening. You can write to your hometown paper, to national publications covering end-of-life issues, or to news outlets in other communities where medical aid in dying is being discussed.

Tips for Writing Letters to the Editor

By following these simple tips, you can write a letter to the editor that is more likely to be approved for publication in your local newspaper or online news media, and gain even more traction on national news sites and in social media.

- 1. Visit the news organization's website.** Review their submission guidelines for letters to the editor and be sure to follow them. You don't want to have your persuasive, well-researched letter rejected because it's too long.
- 2. Send your letter as soon as possible,** ideally within 48 hours of publication if you are responding to a published article, or within one week of an event.
- 3. Keep your letter concise.** Make one to three points in 200 words or less (again, follow the guidelines on the news organization's website for writing letters to the editor).
- 4. Close with a thought for readers to remember.** It can be a compelling fact, a personal story that's relevant to your audience, or a call to action in support of or opposition to a policy or piece of legislation.
- 5. Mention Compassion & Choices.** Direct the reader to CompassionAndChoices.org.
- 6. If and when your letter is public, share it!** Post the link to your letter on Facebook and Tweet it out to your followers. Be sure to tag Compassion & Choices.

Dear Editor,

I had not given end-of-life care options much thought until recently when a close family member was diagnosed with a terminal illness and I witnessed suffering from excruciating pain that no medication or palliative care could alleviate.

Residents of our state should have the option, together with their families and their doctors, to make the end-of-life care decisions that are right for them in the final stages of a terminal illness. These options should include the ability to request a prescription from their doctor for medication they can decide to take to end their dying process peacefully if their suffering becomes unbearable.

I stand with strong majorities of Americans who agree 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.”

While many people would not choose the option to take medication to peacefully end an agonizing dying process if faced with terminal illness, I believe it is not for me to judge someone else’s decision about how they die or how much suffering to endure. This is an intensely personal decision and I believe it is up to the individual, not the government, to make the decision that is best for them.

Polls show Americans across the country overwhelmingly support making medical aid in dying available for every adult at the end of life. Please join me in urging our state legislators to support medical aid-in-dying legislation in our state.

Sincerely,
John Q. Public

Commenting Online

While writing a letter to the editor takes a little time and effort, another way you can make an immediate impact is through commenting directly on media articles that you see or read. By commenting on a news organization’s or public official’s Facebook page, or responding to a post by one of the above, you can help ensure medical aid in dying is well represented to whomever is reading the article or post and the comments that follow.

Raising your voice in this quick and simple way can help remind everyone of the powerful coalition we’ve assembled in favor of end-of-life options in general and medical aid in dying specifically.

A Few Tips to Get You Started

You can make a post in response to an article you see, either agreeing or disagreeing. Or you can address a major policy development, a community event or other noteworthy happening. You can respond to your hometown papers, to national publications covering end-of-life issues, or to news outlets in other communities where medical aid in dying is being discussed.

- 1. Register with the website or media outlet.** This is typically required in order to comment on news stories or blog posts; registration is always free, but you’ll need to provide an email address.

- 2. Follow the same common-sense guidelines for formal letters.** It may take a few hours or a day for the editors to approve your post, but they almost always do, as long as the writer is reasonable and appropriate.
- 3. Stick to the facts.** Social media is notorious for inspiring people who might not otherwise weigh in on an issue to take to social media with perceived impunity. Stay above the fray; don't engage in personal attacks or philosophical arguments. Respond with the facts and move on.
- 4. Consider the source.** As "fake news" abounds on social media, check that any article you repost or comment on comes from a reputable source. Nothing hurts our cause more than spreading inaccurate or inflammatory information.
- 5. Spread your message.** Once you've written a comment in favor of medical aid in dying, look for a few more articles on a related topic, and consider commenting regularly.
- 6. Remember to mention Compassion & Choices.** Mention the organization in your comment, and consider including a link to CompassionAndChoices.org, if that is allowed by the media outlet.

Writing Letters to Lawmakers

Writing letters to your elected representatives is another important way to help Compassion & Choices secure passage of medical aid-in-dying laws in every state. Letters should stress the importance of the accessibility of the full range of end-of-life options and show lawmakers that their constituents support end-of-life autonomy. Legislative staff keep tallies on how many letters arrive on various issues and what position they express. Every letter you or your friends send will be recorded and, over time, can have a tremendous impact.

Tips for Writing Letters to Elected Officials

- 1. Find contact information** for your elected officials on <http://support.compassionandchoices.org/site/PageNavigator/AdvocacyTool.htm>
- 2. Keep your letter concise.** As with letters to the editor, choose one to three points and make them in 200 words or less.
- 3. Close with a reference to broad support in the community** on this issue. Add a personal story or relevant local statistic if possible.
- 4. Always be courteous and respectful.** The tone in letters to lawmakers should be as carefully considered as words in in-person meetings.
- 5. Remember to mention Compassion & Choices.** Send the reader to CompassionAndChoices.org and/or enclose a factsheet relevant to the issue addressed in your letter.

Dear Senator Smith,

I am writing because I am deeply concerned over the lack of attention given to those facing the end of life due to illness or age. Our laws are out of date, and do not protect the rights and freedoms of patients and citizens.

Further, there are many instances of unwanted medical care being literally forced on helpless patients who are terminally ill, at the behest of their healthcare providers. There are too many perverse financial incentives for hospitals and hospices in the absence of meaningful regulation.

Our state does not have a death-with-dignity law like Oregon, Washington, Vermont and others. As a result, many patients are tormented by unwanted medical treatment at the end of life, which is pointless, and is often painful and inhumane.

Please help us bring death with dignity and aid-in-dying laws to our state. This issue has broad support in our community, and Compassion & Choices has detailed recommendations for legislative language and policy considerations.

Sincerely,
Jane Q. Public

Make Letter-Writing a Group Activity

Sitting down and writing a letter by yourself is a great start. Now think about how to multiply your activism and really get some attention! Whether as part of a meeting, a social event, or just a gathering of a few friends for coffee or a glass of wine, it's easy to set aside 10 minutes to ask everyone to write a letter in support of medical aid in dying. When several letters arrive at once, it only heightens the impact and visibility of the issue wherever the letters are received. Below you'll find a few tips on hosting a letter-writing party:

- 1. Provide supplies.** Make sure you have plenty of sheets of blank paper, envelopes, pens and — if you really want to get those letters moving — stamps!
- 2. Identify in advance whom you want the letters to target.** You can choose to target more than one organization or official; just be sure to bring the relevant addresses.
- 3. Print out this guide** or bring some sample letters to share so everyone knows what a basic letter looks like and which messages they should include.

- 4. Remember to mention Compassion & Choices in any letter you send.** This can help the recipients make the connection between all of our efforts and understand Compassion & Choices' role in building an effective coalition. Also enclose relevant fact sheets if appropriate and reference the C&C website: CompassionAndChoices.org.
- 5. Encourage everyone to consider including a personal anecdote or story.** It can be their own, someone they know, or a more public example. A personal story humanizes your letter and illustrates the importance of the issue in a way that facts or statistics cannot.
- 6. Host a virtual party.** Consider emailing a group of friends with whom you regularly socialize or discuss important issues. Attach any relevant Compassion & Choices factsheets and a sample letter. Ask them to report back where they sent letters.



Care and Choice at the End of Life

Chapter 2:

PETITIONS, TABLING, AND CANVASSING

Chapter 2: Petitions, Tabling and Canvassing

Grassroots organizing is a critical tool in educating the public and building consensus and support around medical aid in dying. As we've seen with many issues in national politics, grassroots momentum in support of or opposition to a law or policy can be extremely powerful. And in the case of medical aid in dying specifically, it puts a face and a voice to an issue many may know little about.

If you're willing and able to coordinate a grassroots effort — gathering petition signatures, canvassing, tabling — great! But as with all other tactics outlined in this guide, please contact your state outreach staff or local Action Team leader to coordinate with ongoing activities.

Petitions: Grassroots Activism 101

The simplest of political acts, signing a petition remains among the most important currencies in public policy. Petitions, like letters, are monitored and tracked by public officials and legislative staff, and tallies are kept on the numbers of supporters on either side of an issue. Strong community support, demonstrated through large numbers of petition signatures, can help politicians feel more comfortable supporting a controversial issue.

Below we offer some basic ideas and best practices for both gathering signatures on petitions for medical aid-in-dying laws and presenting those petitions to your local, state and federal elected officials as well as to Compassion & Choices.

KEY TIP: Copy Compassion & Choices!

Regardless of what kind of petition you are using or whom you are petitioning, always send a copy of the completed petition to Compassion & Choices so that we can track and aggregate all grassroots activism like yours, and amplify it in our meetings with legislators. petitions@compassionandchoices.org

What Should My Petition Say?

Use the basic petition in support of medical aid-in-dying laws found in the appendix of this toolkit to ask people for their general support. For petitions on behalf of (or calling for) specific legislation in your state, contact Compassion & Choices or your local Action Team leader.

Types of Petitions

Compassion & Choices recommends that you choose between three basic types of petitions, depending upon how you wish to submit the petition and whether legislation is under consideration in your state: general support petitions, legislative petitions and online petitions.

General Support Petitions

Like the one provided at the end of this guide, general support petitions ask people to offer their signature in general support of the medical aid-in-dying platform, but not for specific legislation. You should be ready to answer basic questions about Compassion & Choices and about medical aid-in-dying policies.

Legislative Petitions

Petitions that support proposed medical aid-in-dying legislation or seek the creation of specific legislation are called legislative petitions. It is important to check with Compassion & Choices before drafting or circulating a legislative petition to be sure you are using the most current and effective language to support end-of-life options in your state. For legislative petitions, you should be able to answer specific questions about the legislation you are supporting and be ready to explain your support for its provisions.

Online Petitions

Online petitions can be extremely useful for responding quickly to an event on the ground: Lawmakers voted down medical aid-in-dying legislation; a hearing has been scheduled; the city council responded negatively to your pitch for a pro medical aid-in-dying resolution. Change.org provides an easy platform for digital petitioning. As with regular petitions, please check with Compassion & Choices to be sure you are using the most current and effective language to support end-of-life options in your state.

Six Simple Rules for Petitioning

Regardless of which type of petition you're circulating, remember these simple rules:

- 1. Set a goal.** Even a modest goal like 20 signatures will keep you on task. After you gather 20, repeat. Repeat five times, and you have 100 signatures to present to your legislator!
- 2. Offer an incentive.** Something as simple as a cute sticker or piece of candy can make someone feel appreciated for stopping and giving their time to sign.
- 3. Ask each person individually.** If you engage a group, knock on a door where several people are present, or email friends or community members, ask each person to support medical aid in dying with their signature.
- 4. Be courteous and respectful to everyone.** You will likely encounter people who disagree with our views. If that's the case, thank the person for their time and move on.
- 5. If someone appears to want to avoid you, let them.** Never force an interaction.

- 6. *Be ready to answer questions about death.*** You might speak to folks who haven't really been exposed to the issue or have outdated views, so be prepared with information about medical aid in dying and end-of-life options.
- 7. *To lend authority to your efforts, always make it clear that you are working with Compassion & Choices.*** Direct any additional inquiries to the website at CompassionAndChoices.org.
- 8. *Include us.*** Always return a copy of the signed petitions to Compassion & Choices at petitions@compassionandchoices.org

Make It a Contest!

Getting 20, 40 or even 60 petitions signed by yourself is a great start. Now think about how to multiply your activism and really get some attention! All you need is to identify some like-minded friends and colleagues, and recruit them into your petition drive. Offer a prize for the person who returns the most signatures by a certain date or for the first one to submit 50 signatures. A \$10 gift card or similar treat is easy and inexpensive. A few tips on putting together a successful petition contest:

- 1. *Make your list.*** Identify at least ten people you think might participate.
- 2. *Get the word out.*** Send an email announcing your petition drive and prize offer. Attach the petition and provide the basic pointers outlined above for gathering signatures.
- 3. *Go social.*** Consider expanding your drive to social media by posting on Facebook or Twitter and asking whether anyone would commit to gathering 25 signatures. Have people message you privately, then get in touch via email and send them the petition.
- 4. *Acknowledge the winner.*** Announce the winner of your petition drive on Facebook or Twitter, and/or acknowledge them in person or via email to your petition group.

Tabling: Bringing Medical Aid-in-Dying Issues to the Community

Tabling and petition signing go hand in hand. Staffing a table provides an opportunity to bring medical aid-in-dying issues into your community in a friendly, visible way. Tabling also gives you a base of operations for your petition drive and allows people to explore the issue, ask questions, and gather information and materials. A carefully presented table also gives important brand visibility to Compassion & Choices and the end-of-life options movement.

Guidelines for Tabling

While tabling is a relatively easy way to gather petition signatures and raise awareness, it still requires some forethought and preparation. Follow these tips for a successful tabling effort, and use the tabling checklist found in the appendix of this toolkit to stay organized.

- 1. Location, location, location.** Choose the spot for your table carefully: Where will you get a decent amount of foot traffic? Where are people already accustomed to displays and vendors?
- 2. Ask permission.** If you are interested in tabling on private property like a mall or a movie theater, always get permission first.
- 3. Find out whether you need permits.** To table in a public park, on a college campus, or at a farmer's market or other event, a permit or registration is sometimes required.
- 4. Move if asked.** Use common sense; if you don't have specific permission and are asked to leave, relocate your table to a permissible public space.
- 5. Partner up.** It is always a good idea to recruit a table partner. You'll have more fun, get more signatures and be even more engaging!
- 6. Have materials on hand.** Make sure to display the latest Compassion & Choices materials (quarterly magazine, palm cards, etc.) nicely at your table and have your petitions on clipboards with pens at the ready.
- 7. Be creative and have fun!** More people will be interested in approaching a table that is fun-looking and friendly. Signs, prizes and treats are great ways to entice people to say hello.

Once you've thought through the preparations and process, you can focus on fine tuning your outreach approach. It's important to actively engage people. Don't think about tabling as setting up materials and sitting down to wait for people to approach you. Stand and greet people as they walk by. Make eye contact and invite them to pause and learn more. You may be nervous about speaking to strangers, and that's normal — just remember you're having conversations about an issue you care about. After two or three conversations, it will become easier and more natural.

Speaking with strangers will also be easier if you arrive at your tabling event with a clear message and a short pitch to draw people in. An example of a pitch is, "Hi, will you please sign our petition?" This may seem very simple and general, but rather than get a quick "no" or "I don't have time right now," it results in people asking "what is it for?" This buys you the time and opportunity to answer and engage the person with greater detail. As you are talking with people, pay attention to their body language and modify the way you approach them accordingly. If somebody is clearly in a hurry, cut to the chase. If they seem interested, spend some time asking about their story and talking about the issues. Similarly, pay attention to how people respond to what you say, and fine-tune your pitch as you get an idea for what resonates with people.

KEY TIP: Pitch Examples

- Hi, could you sign our petition of support?
- Hi, we need your help! Please sign our petition?
- Hi! Please sign our petition of support!

Canvassing: Taking the Show on the Road

Canvassing is a more direct approach than tabling because it involves going house to house (or business to business) and asking people for their support. Many people appreciate the neighborhood touch that canvassing brings, but others are bothered by being disturbed at home. Try to use good judgment and follow these tips for a safe, successful canvass:

- 1. Be prepared.** Have a clipboard with your petition at the ready along with some basic materials on Compassion & Choices, several pens and a great attitude.
- 2. Choose your words.** Plan what you are going to say when someone opens the door, and practice it several times.
- 3. Ring, then knock.** When door knocking, if there's a doorbell, push hard and listen for the sound of the bell. If there isn't a doorbell or you don't hear it ringing, don't be afraid to knock. And be sure you knock loudly enough that they can hear you!
- 4. Do the wave.** Once you see someone approaching the door, be sure to wave so they know you are friendly and want to talk with them.
- 5. Make it personal.** Smile and make eye contact while you're speaking. Introduce yourself at the beginning.
- 6. Don't debate.** If the person you're speaking to is very busy or is strongly opposed, it's best to move on quickly. Canvassing is about finding the people who already agree with us or are undecided, so don't spend time arguing with people who are opposed.
- 7. Buddy up.** Canvassing can be intimidating for people who haven't done it before, so never go alone.
- 8. End positively.** Always end the conversation on a positive note. Thank the person for their time, even if they didn't agree or sign your petition.

KEY TIP: Safety First!

Follow these guidelines to ensure a safe canvass:

- Stay in your comfort zone. Only canvass in areas that you know, like where you live.

- Never canvass alone. Always go with a friend or colleague.
- Don't knock on a door if there are loud pets or other obstacles present.
- Never go inside a house, even if invited.

See Appendix for Chapter Resources



Care and Choice at the End of Life

Chapter 3:

BASIC

LOBBYING

Chapter 3: Basic Lobbying

Compassion & Choices deeply values the volunteers, partners and other supporters who lobby legislators and other public officials in support of the medical aid-in-dying movement. Before you undertake any type of lobbying activities, please contact your state outreach staff or local Action Team leader to coordinate with ongoing activities.

Americans have a generally dim view of “lobbyists,” often for good reasons! But lobbying actually includes all kinds of basic communication with our government, including everyday community members visiting their elected representatives to explain what they think of certain policies and how they would like to see their elected officials vote. It’s democracy in action — and you can be a part of it.

Depending on the current priorities of your state campaign or Action Team, lobbying your state legislature can be one of the most impactful actions you take to support authorizing medical aid in dying in your state. This chapter will walk you through the basics of lobbying your local representative.

KEY TIP: Know Your State

Every state is different: As mentioned above, even if there is a legislative campaign in your state, there are likely to be many differences, both in the legislation and the strategy, from other states. It’s crucial to check in with Compassion & Choices before scheduling a lobbying visit.

Step One: Writing Letters to Public Officials

Writing letters to your state representatives and other officials is a great first step and a good way to build toward a lobbying visit. Please see the section in chapter 1 called “[Writing Letters to Lawmakers](#)” for resources and tips on writing an impactful letter. These letters can be an important primer for a face-to-face visit. So with the help of your fellow volunteers, we suggest sending approximately 10 letters into your representative’s office before scheduling a visit.

Step Two: Preparing for a Legislative Meeting

Whatever the nature of your visit — to support specific legislation, promote the drafting of new legislation or solicit broad support for the medical aid-in-dying movement — these basic steps will help ensure a successful meeting with a legislator or their staff.

- 1. *Always make an appointment.*** Meeting with community members and local issue groups is a part of your legislator’s job, and it is the primary responsibility of their staff,

so they will very likely accommodate you. But their schedules fill up quickly, so always make an appointment. Most meetings will last 15 minutes.

- 2. *Prepare your pitch.*** At the top of the meeting, you will be invited to summarize your concerns. Plan what you are going to say using no more than five bullet points. Consult fact sheets located in the [Understand the Issues](#) page of the Compassion & Choices website for talking points. Then deliver each point with a small amount of supporting information. From there, let the legislator or their staff ask questions.
- 3. *Always include a personal story, even if it isn't yours.*** Personal stories are effective because they really illustrate how end-of-life care and the importance of options impacts people. If you don't have a personal story to share, look in the local media for an appropriate end-of-life story that helps make the point (if you do this, bring a clipping or printout of the article). If you can't find a local story, consider using the national stories of Brittany Maynard, Miguel Carrascillo or others featured on [CompassionAndChoices.org](#).
- 4. *Bring some materials from Compassion & Choices to share.*** We suggest copies of our quarterly magazine, brochures and fact sheets, many of which can be downloaded from [CompassionAndChoices.org](#).
- 5. *Always dress appropriately.*** This is a business meeting — even if you know your representative personally — so please wear business attire. You don't have to wear a formal suit, but jeans and polo or t-shirts are not usually appropriate. If you are uncertain about the culture of your state capitol and what to wear, check with Compassion & Choices staff.
- 6. *Be on time.*** Legislative offices are busy. And, much like the doctor's office, you will probably have to wait a few minutes for your meeting. But it is important to send the right message about your commitment by being on time or a little early.
- 7. *Always be courteous and respectful.*** It can be difficult encountering someone who doesn't share our views. While most legislators and staff are polite listeners, some may become defensive or aggressive if they are staunchly opposed to medical aid in dying. No matter their position (or disposition), listen to their concerns and respond calmly, sticking to the facts and your personal experience.
- 8. *Follow up your meeting with a thank-you note.*** Just like any other business interaction, the best practice is to follow up with a short note to the staffer with whom you met, thanking them for taking the time to meet with you. You can also use this as an opportunity to mention anything you may have forgotten in the meeting, recap any action points or promises made by the staff member, or to raise new facts or evidence based on what you discussed.

KEY TIP: Meetings With Staff

If it's possible to meet directly with a legislator, that's fantastic. However, it's

unlikely that the legislator will be available — your best bet, especially starting out, is to schedule a meeting with legislative staff. Use a staff meeting as an opportunity to introduce the issue to your legislator’s office, and then follow up by asking for a meeting directly with your representative.

Step Three: Appearing at a Legislative Committee Hearing

Once legislation has been introduced in any state, the legislative process can be complex. Compassion & Choices has teams of experienced personnel working to support legislation through the process. Committee hearings, held by the legislative committee with responsibility for a particular bill — based on its content — is one key step in the legislative process. Hearings are also an invaluable opportunity for a bill’s supporters (and opponents) to marshal their best arguments and turn out key supporters to either help move the bill forward or block its progress. Compassion & Choices always needs the visible support of volunteers and activists at committee hearings, which are almost always open to the public. We offer the following tips for participating in a legislative committee hearing:

- 1. Show up — whether the hearing is about existing law or new legislation.** It’s critical to express broad support both for proposed medical aid-in-dying legislation and existing legislation. The best way to support the process is to attend the hearing, and bring a friend!
- 2. If you plan to speak, be prepared.** Hearings usually include an opportunity for public comment. Anyone interested in speaking on behalf of the legislation is asked to sign in and then make a very brief (one- to two-minute) statement. If you choose to speak, please refer to our website and check in with your Compassion & Choices staff contact to make sure your comments include the most current information.
- 3. Give us a shout-out!** Remember to mention Compassion & Choices in your statement.
- 4. Always dress appropriately for a hearing.** Be sure to wear business or business casual attire (no jeans, shorts, t-shirts or flip flops).
- 5. Observe strict rules of behavior.** Please do not engage in shouting, booing or even applause — none are allowed in a hearing.
- 6. Sign up!** You generally *can* carry a small sign — nothing larger than what you can carry by yourself, and nothing that will block anyone’s view. Think of a short, memorable slogan and include Compassion & Choices on your sign. Check with staff about the appropriateness of a sign for a particular hearing.

Step Four: Holding a Lobby Day

While meeting with a legislator or legislative staff is an important way to show your support, for even greater impact consider gathering a small group (4-6 people) and schedule as many meetings with legislators and/or staff as you can in a single day. Done well, “lobby days” can significantly elevate a legislator’s view of existing support in the community for medical aid-in-dying laws. Follow these simple tips to hold a successful lobby day in your state capitol.

- 1. Be sure to schedule all your meetings in advance.** All other tips for legislative meetings apply for a Lobby Day as well. Remember, meeting with staff is also a win!
- 2. Be sure to schedule at least 15 minutes between each meeting.** Offices are not always close together in proximity, and some meetings may run long.
- 3. Be prepared to adapt your location.** Not all assembly or Senate members have private offices, so be prepared to hold your meeting in a café or other location instead.
- 4. Bring enough materials.** Carry a folder that includes a basic letter outlining your position and the appropriate Compassion & Choices-branded materials to offer to each office you meet with.
- 5. Draft a strong, basic pitch to deliver.** This can be the same pitch outlined in your letter. Keep your opening remarks brief to ensure time for questions and discussion. When possible, include a personal story to help illustrate the issues’ human dimension.
- 6. Don’t forget the shout-out!** Remember to mention Compassion & Choices in all your meetings.

KEY TIP: Deliver Petitions in Person

To add emphasis to your legislative visit, consider personally delivering a stack of signed petitions or letters to the legislator or staff when you meet with them. It will sharpen the impact of your visit and add weight to the signatures. Always make extra copies of signed petitions!



Care and Choice at the End of Life

Chapter 4:

PASSING A LOCAL RESOLUTION

Chapter 4: Passing a Local Resolution

Local government resolutions, proclamations or declarations — expressions of support from an elected city or county body (council, board, commission, etc.) — send an important message about the urgency of end-of-life options and care. They also put state legislators on notice that other levels of government are engaged with and supportive of medical aid in dying. In short, passing a local resolution is one of the most effective strategies to lay the foundation for medical aid-in-dying legislative efforts.

If this is something you'd like to see happen in your city or county, start by conducting some research about the local resolution process and the makeup of your locally elected body to determine whether your local jurisdiction is a good fit for this type of effort. If so, identify a couple of friends or neighbors who also support medical aid in dying to assist you. You will need help, and finding partners will broaden your networks for reaching other residents who share your view.

In the following pages, we provide step-by-step instructions for engaging your local government and working to pass a city or county resolution or proclamation in support of medical aid in dying for terminally ill people who are suffering.

Do Your Research

Not all local elected bodies or officials will be ready to take a stand on medical aid in dying. You want to be sure to focus your efforts on the most impactful actions, so it's important to do some preliminary research before pursuing a local resolution. To accomplish this, you should identify your local jurisdiction's elected bodies, research the elected officials who serve in them and use this information to guide your decision on how to move forward. See detailed steps to accomplish this below.

Identify your local jurisdictions' elected bodies

Your local jurisdictions' elected bodies may include your town or city council, county board of commissioners or supervisors, community councils, etc. Research the process by which your jurisdiction issues resolutions/proclamations.

Once you've identified your jurisdictions, research the answers to these questions for each jurisdiction you are a resident of:

- ❓ Does the body have any similar resolutions on the books?
- ❓ How many council/board members are there?
- ❓ What is the legislative process to pass a resolution?

- Will a resolution have to go through a subcommittee before reaching the full body for vote?
- If so, what committee and which members are on it?
- How often do they meet?
- How many votes are needed for it to pass both the subcommittee and the full council or board?
- Can the mayor, chair or president veto the resolution?
- Is the mayor, chair or president a voting member of the body?

If you don't know or it isn't obvious after an online search, call the elected body's clerk or contact your locally elected official and ask what the options, procedures and correct terminology are for passing resolutions or proclamations

Identify the Elected Officials in Each Jurisdiction

Learn more about each of the elected officials who are needed to pass the resolution. Specifically, find out the following:

- 🔍 Name
- 🔍 Party affiliation (if none, research political leanings)
- 🔍 Priority issues
- 🔍 Voting record on health-related issues, especially if there is a voting record that is hostile to medical aid in dying
- 🔍 Local influence, role on the board or commission, past experience, media mentions and standing in the community.
- 🔍 Credibility: personal story, related policy experience with the issue, other related efforts

Make a Decision!

Once you've collected the information that you need, discuss the details with your Compassion & Choices campaign manager. The two of you can then determine whether any of your jurisdictions is a good option for pursuing a local resolution. Keep in mind that not all jurisdictions are ready for this kind of resolution, as disappointing as that may be. Because we want to make the greatest use of our limited resources, we'll only move forward with efforts where we can realistically expect to succeed.

What Is a Local Resolution?

Every city and county works a little differently when it comes to these public statements, and they will go by different names. Often, for example, it is a mayor who issues such declarations — or signs or vetoes those passed by a city council. In some jurisdictions, a resolution is actually a binding commitment by city lawmakers. In others, proclamations are issued by agencies as rules. But in every city or county elected body, there is a mechanism for the

elected representatives to vote on and issue some kind of public declaration expressing their support for — or at least acknowledgment of — a particular position on a matter of public importance or interest.

Before you begin, make sure you know how your city or county issues such statements. If you don't already know and can't find the information on your local government website, simply call your own local representative's office or the main information line and ask. Tell them you are interested in having a non-binding resolution or proclamation introduced for your city or county — no need to discuss the topic — and ask what the options, proper terminology and standard procedures are.

As you reach out to your local elected officials, you will quickly find that medical aid in dying is not a traditional partisan issue. The idea that people who are dying should have the option to end their suffering in the face of certain, near-term death resonates with people across both major political parties — and beyond. And the idea that individuals should be able to make medical decisions free from government intrusion is fundamental to American political values.

A sample resolution you can share with elected officials and their staffs is available in the appendix of this toolkit for your reference. Use it as a template for your own local versions.

In May of 2015, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting medical aid in dying legislation. In October of that same year, the state legislature approved the California End of Life Option Act.

Getting a Local Resolution Passed

Resolutions and other declarations on medical aid in dying have been critical momentum-builders in states like California, where an active campaign was working to pass a statewide law. They can also be enormously important to generating visibility in states where we are still building campaign infrastructure.

Identify a Strategic Sponsor and Champion

Ideally, you will have an ally on the city council, county commission, or village or township board, or maybe even the mayor will help you navigate the process — and the politics. But the fact is, the easiest person to convince to sponsor your legislation is not always the best messenger. Your champion should not be polarizing. They should have a proven and recent record of passing legislation and, if possible, some credibility to speak to this issue — either through personal or professional experience, or other efforts they have been involved in.

Know the Rules

Your champion should know these details, but here are things you need to know as the person most invested in seeing this declaration or resolution pass. How many council members are there? Will the resolution be binding or symbolic? Will the resolution have to go through a subcommittee before the council votes on it? Which committee? Who is on that committee? How many votes are needed for it to pass? Can the mayor issue a veto? Is the mayor a member of the body? Also, does the body have similar resolutions for other issues in place?

Give Your Champion Solid, Fact-Based Talking Points

Some of our most enthusiastic advocates have very personal reasons for supporting medical aid in dying, and they explain their support in ways that make others uncomfortable or, frankly, can put people off. The next section of this document has some facts about medical aid in dying and the language we know works to help others understand what it is and why it's such an important option. Make sure you understand it and that you share it with your legislative champion(s) so they can be maximally persuasive when talking to their colleagues.

Draft Your Resolution

The precise wording of the resolution is flexible. Not every local council or other body is ready to support full authorization, but they may be willing to support something less ambitious that is a step along the path toward full end-of-life options. Go with what works and remember that the by-word of politics is compromise.

EXAMPLE: the city of West Hollywood — the first in California to weigh in on this issue with a local resolution — was not yet ready to call for full authorization of medical aid in dying. But they were ready to call on local district attorneys in Los Angeles County to refrain from prosecuting any doctor or family member involved with medical aid in dying.

Be Available to Explain the Issue to Undecided and Persuadable Representatives

If in reaching out to the swing votes (based on what you and your legislative champion can determine), you realize one of the members of the body seems to oppose medical aid in dying, don't badger them. Just be respectful of their position and try to clear up any misinformation. If they ask about your strategy, refer them to the resolution sponsor. If they are supportive, make sure to solidify their support by educating them further on the issue. You do not need to meet with members of the body who are in strong opposition as you may antagonize them, potentially alert them to your strategy and waste your limited resources. You should be respectful toward opponents to keep them from becoming vocal or active in defeating the resolution.

Plan for a Great Hearing

If you don't have enough support to pass a resolution, you may be able to present the issue without having a vote. If you do have the votes and decide to move forward, you will likely have a public hearing.

- ❓ Find others willing to join your cause: Identify supportive constituents and organizations with a strong voice in the community. The more people who are present and testify in support of a resolution the more likely it will pass.
- ❓ Seek out opinion leaders with a stake in this issue, such as doctors, faith leaders and hospice nurses who are in favor of this end-of-life option.
- ❓ Provide talking points to all of your speakers, including supportive members of the elected body.
- ❓ Make sure your speakers know when and where the hearing is.
- ❓ Make sure your speakers know the rules for the hearing: Most will have a limit on how long testimony can run, often just a few minutes. Keep all your speakers under that limit!
- ❓ If you have identified supporters with particularly compelling stories, Compassion & Choices has resources and experts who can provide training and guidance. A well-prepared storyteller humanizes the issues and can have a tremendous impact in persuading undecided votes.

Email the Elected Officials Who Will Be Voting on Your Resolution

Make sure all your supporters email the committee members to urge them to vote in favor of the declaration, resolution, etc. But remember, the emails need to be respectful, brief and personal. They are the most likely to be read and taken seriously.

Follow-Up and Getting the Word Out

Write a letter thanking your champion for their time and support. If your efforts fail, express disappointment and indicate any next steps based on advice from Compassion & Choices advocacy staff. If you achieve success, work with Compassion & Choices to publicize your win!

See the Appendix for a Sample Resolution



Care and Choice at the End of Life

Chapter 5:

HOLDING A “HOW TO DIE IN OREGON” SCREENING

Chapter 5: Holding a “How to Die in Oregon” Screening

In 1997, Oregon became the first state where medical aid in dying was authorized. As a result, individuals who meet the strict requirements of the law can request a prescription to end their life if their suffering becomes unbearable. Since 1997, more than 1,000 Oregonians have utilized medical aid in dying to end their lives. In “How to Die in Oregon,” filmmaker Peter Richardson gently enters the lives of the terminally ill as they consider whether — and when — to use the law in order to bring about a peaceful death.

Richardson examines both sides of this complex, emotionally charged issue. What emerges is a life-affirming, staggeringly powerful portrait of what it means to provide an individual with a full range of end-of-life options. “How to Die in Oregon” features Compassion & Choices volunteers conducting their end-of-life support services and explores the organization’s roots.

“How to Die in Oregon” won the Grand Jury Prize for Documentary at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, along with numerous other accolades. The film was acquired for television by HBO, where it enjoyed a lengthy run, and is now available on demand on Netflix.

Hosting a screening of this landmark film is one particularly visceral and engaging way to spark conversation with volunteers, partners and allies who are interested in medical aid in dying and other end-of-life issues. The film offers a rare opportunity to bring people together to witness the intimate, human dimension of dying, while still having enough distance for thoughtful conversations about end-of-life options.

Expert panelists or speakers from the medical profession, clergy, and even individuals and families who have been touched by a terminal diagnosis can provide deeper context and understanding of the issues as part of a discussion. Screenings can also be an opportunity to spark awareness and action around the medical aid-in-dying movement. In the pages that follow, we offer tips and tools to help make your screening a success.

What Do I Need to Host a Screening?

It sounds cliché, but it really is easy to host a small screening event in your home or at a local community space. Film events are always among the most popular activities, and this acclaimed documentary is a superb launching point for discussing important community issues like medical aid in dying and end-of-life care. That said, we do have a few tips to get you started and a handy checklist in the appendix of this toolkit.

1. **Make your list.** Use your contacts to create an invitation list. If your list feels short (you should plan for a 50% or less response rate), encourage invitees to bring a friend and indicate the guest in their RSVP.
2. **Identify and reserve a space to gather.** It could be your living room, your backyard, a meeting room at the library or a local community center.
3. **Choose how you will show the film.** If you're a Netflix member with DVD rental included in your subscription, you can order it from Netflix. The film is also available to stream on Amazon.com. Your local library may also have the film available for check out. Or, you can purchase or borrow a copy from Compassion & Choices. Make sure you have the appropriate equipment (TV, DVD player).
4. **Get a headcount.** Try to get a final RSVP list several days before the screening to ensure you have enough materials, snacks and seating.
5. **Make handouts.** You can print factsheets from Compassion & Choices' "Understanding the Issues" webpage (CompassionAndChoices.org/understand-medical-aid-in-dying/).
6. **Provide refreshments.** Drinks and light snacks make everyone happy; if the group is small you can even ask everyone to contribute something to share.
7. **Prep the space.** Be sure to have ample seating, and place the TV, refreshments and materials in easy reach.
8. **Provide directions,** including where to park or other relevant logistics.
9. **Have participants sign in.** Make sure everyone provides an email address — particularly if they came with a friend or heard about the screening on social media (see below) so that you can follow up after the event.
10. **Get signatures.** If you're also gathering petition signatures (see [Chapter 2: Petitions, Tabling and Canvassing](#)), this is a great opportunity to get some John Hancocks! Use the petition template found in the appendix of this toolkit to gather signatures.
11. **Go social.** Use social media to promote your screening and keep the momentum going afterwards. Use Facebook to invite friends and raise awareness several times before the screening (see image at right) and post photos from the event afterwards. Be sure to tag Compassion & Choices to help increase your reach and add photos if possible. You can share your post on local community pages and neighborhood apps like Nextdoor. Add hashtags like #medicalaidindying, along with our handle (@compandchoices) to Facebook posts and tweets.



KEY TIP: Finding “How to Die in Oregon”

There are several ways you can procure a copy of How to Die in Oregon for your own screening:

1. Rent and stream from Amazon.com on your smart TV or personal device hooked up to screen.
2. If you are a Netflix DVD member, rent the DVD from Netflix.
3. Purchase or borrow a copy of the DVD from Compassion & Choices.
4. Check with your local library.

How Much of the Film Should I Show?

While in an ideal world we’d encourage you to show the entire film, we recognize that at-home screenings can face time constraints, and “How to Die in Oregon” is nearly two hours long. When you add an introduction, special guests, and a discussion or activity, that could result in a long evening. Think about your goals for the gathering, and consider one of the three options below:

Option 1: Show the Entire Film, in Two Parts (RECOMMENDED)

We will provide you with several options for precisely where to pause the film. Inform your audience that you will resume screening the film after some additional discussion, then proceed to your panel discussion and other activities. Once your panel or activities are complete, resume the film to completion.

Option 2: Screen Only the Film’s First Half (About One Hour)

We will provide you with several options for precisely where to stop the film. Proceed to your panel discussion and/or other activities. Recommend that your guests finish watching the film at home (on Amazon or DVD).

Option 3: Show the Entire Film (1:43) in One Sitting

If you choose to show the entire film, you will need to limit your other speakers or activities as people will be restless after sitting for nearly two hours. Plan to have any remarks, materials, distribution or calls to action before the film begins. Don’t be alarmed if people leave during the film.

Managing the Conversation

When you gather friends, neighbors and family to view this film, a robust conversation about the issues is an important part of your evening. Consider the following tips for a respectful, engaging discussion:

- 1. Make time.** Plan your evening so that you have plenty of time for discussion, and ample opportunity for your audience to engage and share.
- 2. Read the room.** This film and the topics presented can be emotionally challenging for many people, especially those who may have had some experience with end-of-life issues themselves. It's important to be aware of the energy in the room and to consider changing the focus, style or activity if it appears one or more of your guests is having difficulty.
- 3. Provide a “break room.”** In case either the film or the discussion become too intense for your guests, consider an alternate space (the kitchen, porch, etc.) for someone to take a break, if necessary. (Announce this option before the film begins.) Place boxes of tissues in both the viewing and break rooms.
- 4. Plan activities.** A good group conversation can be made even better with a group activity. Whether advocacy-oriented or educational, audiences will really appreciate the opportunity to apply what they have learned and express how they feel beyond just conversation. We provide a couple of examples for activities in the appendix of this toolkit.
- 5. Share the air.** Remember to give everyone an opportunity to offer their perspective.

Follow Up

No more than 3-4 days after the event, send a short email to thank your guests for coming. This is also a terrific opportunity to ask your guests to take further action with opportunities that are quick, easy, and in most cases don't even require them to leave their computer! See below for a few easy opportunities you can offer your guests to support medical aid in dying on their own:

- 1.** Like Compassion & Choices on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.
- 2.** Share posts and/or photos from the event on Facebook and Twitter.
- 3.** Go to the Compassion & Choices website and sign up to volunteer or for email newsletters.
- 4.** Tell your friends and colleagues about medical aid in dying and Compassion & Choices.
- 5.** Make a contribution to Compassion & Choices online.

For more details on any of these action items, as well as other activities and opportunities to get involved, you can visit: CompassionAndChoices.org/what-you-can-do

See the Appendix for Chapter Resources



Care and Choice at the End of Life

Chapter 6:

HOLDING A HOUSE PARTY

Chapter 6: Holding a House Party

In this chapter you will find guidance and road-tested materials for a successful education and fundraising event in your home. These resources will help you impress on your guests the importance of Compassion & Choices' work and how best they can help. Generous supporters like you power our efforts, and we hope your guests will join you in your involvement with Compassion & Choices.

A Compassion & Choices house party is a great way to accomplish two critical goals: 1) raise the vital funds needed to power Compassion & Choices' work and 2) to educate your guests about end-of-life issues and motivate them to get involved with this movement. As the host, you can accomplish these goals with the help of the tips and tools contained in this guide. We hope your house party is only your guests' first step in joining our movement.

Host Commitments

By offering to host a Compassion & Choices house party, you commit to:

- ❑ Provide space for the party.
- ❑ Invite your personal network.
- ❑ Offer refreshments.
- ❑ Craft an invitation that includes a brief explanation about why this issue is important to you.
- ❑ Decide whether your party will include remarks from an expert on end-of-life topics or a storyteller; if so, contact your Compassion & Choices liaison to help make arrangements.
- ❑ Make fundraising "ask" to guests, starting with your own donation to demonstrate your commitment. Consider matching the donations of your guests to really motivate them!
- ❑ Share all sign-up information with Compassion & Choices.

KEY TIP: Storytelling at Your Event

As the host, you can either tell your own story or you can request a Compassion & Choices storyteller from your state. Contact Compassion & Choices' National Storyteller Program at CompassionAndChoices.org/stories to refine your story or request a storyteller.

Getting People to Your Party

Obviously, healthy attendance is critical to a successful party. A general rule is that your invite list will generate about a 30% response rate, so try to invite about three times as many people as you think your space can hold. As you assemble your guest list, go through your phone and

email contacts, Rolodexes and Facebook friend lists to identify those who might be interested, including:

- ❓ Friends
- ❓ Family
- ❓ Neighbors
- ❓ Coworkers
- ❓ Legislators and other community leaders
- ❓ Your doctor or other healthcare providers
- ❓ Book club members
- ❓ Civic organizations
- ❓ Sports teammates
- ❓ Faith members
- ❓ Members of other civic groups you attend

You might also consider co-hosting with someone — double the resources and double the friends!

Creating Your Invitation

1. Determine Event Details

- ❓ Select one of our house-party topics: medical aid-in-dying campaigns or access campaigns (see the next page for more information on each presentation topic).
- ❓ Think of an interesting title or subject line.
- ❓ Determine the date, time, location and address.
- ❓ Gather other important or pertinent details such as parking directions or building entry.

2. Decide Which Invitation Method to Use

- ❓ Evite.com – You can easily create invitations and manage RSVPs with the invitation website Evite.com. Use the “Invitation Letter” templates found in the appendix of this toolkit to copy and paste into the “message from the host” field in your invitation. Then simply load your guest list and send them in one bunch.
- ❓ Email – Similar to the Evite, find the “Invitation Letter” templates found in the appendix of this toolkit, copy and paste the text into the body of your email and personalize with your message. Then add all of your guest’s email addresses and send out the invitation.
- ❓ Paper – Using the “Invitation Letter” templates found in the appendix of this toolkit personalize, print and mail to your invitees.
- ❓ Facebook – Consider creating a Facebook event in addition to other methods. It’s easy to invite Facebook friends, provide details about the party and post reminders. You can also include the link to the Facebook event on your Evite or email invitations.

- ❓ A combination of electronic, social media and/or paper might be right for you depending on how you keep in touch with your contacts.

3. Create Your Invitation

Once you have determined your event details and invitation method, you can craft your invitation language. You should follow the general structure below, dedicating a paragraph to each of the following:

- ❓ Your welcoming statement. Let folks know you thought of them specifically for this invitation.
- ❓ The presentation topic, any speakers you've confirmed, the date, time and location.
- ❓ Why you support the work of Compassion & Choices and a personal story, if you are comfortable sharing one.
- ❓ Mention that any donation collected at the party will go directly to funding Compassion & Choices' important work.
- ❓ Give instructions for how to RSVP. This will be determined by your invitation method. So whether it's a link to an Evite, a reply to an email or a telephone number, make sure it's clear how to RSVP.

Selecting a Presentation/Discussion Topic

When selecting a presentation topic for your house party, keep in mind your state's medical aid-in-dying status, the current priorities for end-of-life care and who your guests are. For example, if you are hosting a house party in a state where medical aid in dying is already authorized, your speaker's emphasis should be on Compassion & Choices' Access Campaign and related efforts to implement the law. If your guests include nurses, pharmacists and physicians, you should prioritize a speaker who is a medical provider, ideally one who has experience with the law and can present to your guests as peers. Choose one of the following presentation topics for your house party:

Medical Aid-in-Dying Campaigns

Thousands of volunteer advocates and educators are mobilized in every state in the nation. They advance Compassion & Choices' initiatives to change federal policy to improve care and expand choice, enact and implement state medical aid-in-dying laws, and help patients and their loved ones advocate for care that is consistent with their values and priorities.

Access Campaigns

Even in states where medical aid in dying is authorized, our work is not done. Although a state's authorized status may allow terminally ill, mentally capable adults the option to seek medical aid in dying, it does not necessarily provide the support and education that patients and doctors need to navigate the process. Far too many people in authorized states still can't find supportive doctors or healthcare systems, or learn about the law too late. In these states,

Compassion & Choices' Access Campaigns educate doctors, caregivers, families and individuals facing end-of-life suffering about the process for accessing medical aid in dying.

Hosting a Remote Speaker

If you decide to host a speaker who isn't local, be sure to have and test the necessary equipment and technology needed for them to join remotely. Options include Skype, Google Hangout, Facetime or simply using a speakerphone. All of these methods offer free services and can be used via your laptop computer, so take some time to explore their functionality before your event and choose the one you are most comfortable with.

Make sure your guests will be able to see, and most importantly, hear your presenter. If your computer's speakers are not powerful enough, consider connecting external speakers via your headphone jack. If you're having trouble with your technology, contact your Compassion & Choices' campaign manager for assistance.

Screening a Video

If your event will feature a video presentation, you can use the discussion questions and activities found in the appendix to help you lead discussion around the issue. Be sure you have the necessary video on hand and have tested it before your guests arrive.

"How to Die in Oregon" is available streaming via [Amazon.com/amazon-video](https://www.amazon.com/amazon-video) free for Amazon Prime members and for a small fee to others. It's also available via Netflix DVD rental service (not via steaming at this time). Your local library may also have the film available for check out. Or, you can purchase or borrow a copy from Compassion & Choices. Whichever method you choose, make sure you have the appropriate equipment (TV, DVD player, computer or other connective device).

Running Your House Party

Below is a rough timeline for your house party. You can adjust earlier or later and tailor it to your event, but we've found that this structure has led to some very successful events in the past.

6:00 p.m. Host/co-host welcomes arriving guests. Make sure they sign in.

Guests mingle, meet each other, enjoy food and drinks. Guests are invited to gather for the event program portion of the party.

7:00 p.m. Host begins the program, tells their story of support for Compassion & Choices and introduces the featured speaker or other presentation option.

The featured speaker gives their talk or other presentation option. Encourage guests to ask questions and engage them in conversation about Compassion & Choices' work.

As the presentation concludes, make your donation "ask" and commit to a donation yourself, if possible, and distribute envelopes to your guests. Learn more about your fundraising "ask" in the next section.

7:30 p.m. Host/co-host collects envelopes, thanks guests for coming and for their support.

At the host's/co-host's discretion, they may invite guests to stay for more refreshments and conversation.

Your house party can start at any time, but generally a house party will last about two hours.

Making the Ask for Support

A successful house party depends on several factors: strategic invitation lists, good planning and helpful volunteers. If you want the event to be a fundraising success, in the end you have to be prepared to ask your guests for money. These simple steps will help you make a successful ask, even if you might initially be uncomfortable making this kind of request.

- 1. Clearly state the fundraising goal for the event.** As an example: "Today I want to raise a minimum of \$1,000 for Compassion & Choices so it can continue to do great work here in our state and around the country."
- 2. As the host/co-host, be prepared to make the first donation yourself.** It's more effective and easier to ask others for money if you donate first. If you are comfortable, state your donation amount and why you decided to contribute this amount.
- 3. Consider a match.** If you are able and comfortable, consider matching guests' donations up to a certain amount to demonstrate your commitment to the end-of-life options movement.
- 4. Challenge your guests to a specific dollar amount.** This helps guests to dig a little bit deeper. Tie the challenge back to the storyteller's story and the emotional impact created in the room.
- 5. Be confident.** Most importantly, show that you are comfortable asking for their support. This will help increase the number of guests who give along with the amount they give.

- 6. Make donating easy.** Instead of relying on donation envelopes and checks, consider online donations! Place a tablet and/or laptop computer opened to Compassion & Choices' donation page at the sign-in table to make giving even easier.

After the Event

After your event there are a few simple tasks you should undertake to maximize the party's impact.

- 1. Give thanks.** Send thank-you notes to those who attended, with a special thanks to those who generously donated to Compassion & Choices, brought food or other items to your party, or otherwise helped with organizing and/or promoting the event. If you used an invitation platform like Evite, you can easily generate thank-you emails and even share photos of the event.
- 2. Social-ize your event.** If you promoted the event on Facebook or other social media, post some photos (with permission of your guests) to keep the momentum going — who knows, you might inspire a friend in another city or state to get involved and host an event of their own! See example at right — don't forget to tag C&C and check out Facebook's new "Donate" option!
- 3. Return contributions, lists and unused materials.** Within three days, please send your invite and RSVP/check-in lists, unused Compassion & Choices materials, and donations to Compassion & Choices care of Trylon Data Management, 30 Buck Rd, Hanover, NH 03755.



Frequently Asked Questions About Hosting a House Party

What is involved in being a host/co-host?

Nothing much more than the usual party-planning responsibilities: picking a date, inviting your friends, preparing your favorite party dishes, planning the event and enjoying your party.

What are the reasons for having a co-host?

A co-host's primary purpose is to expand and diversify your guest list as well as share the tasks involved in planning and preparation. If you have a great space but not much of a guest list, a great guest list but a small space, or a great space and great list but limited time to plan, co-hosting may be just the thing for you.

How many people should I invite?

Figure out how many people you can fit comfortably in the space you will be using for your party. The general guideline is to invite three times as many people as you hope will attend.

Who should I invite?

Your family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, members of other groups you belong to or participate in, and anyone who you think is concerned about end-of-life care. Keep in mind that one of the main functions of your party is to reach out to a diverse audience, including people who may not be familiar with Compassion & Choices or its work.

How does Compassion & Choices benefit?

House parties play an important role in introducing new people to Compassion & Choices and the end-of-life options movement. By hosting a house party, you and your guests can express financial support for Compassion & Choices as well as your commitment to expand and improve end-of-life options and care. Your house party will power our work with donations and bring new activists to the movement. What could be better?

How do my guests and I benefit?

You and your guests will have the opportunity to participate in an engaging discussion about end-of-life choice and decision-making. They will learn more about Compassion & Choices' work and what you and they can do to bring about real change, including making financial contributions, volunteering or other advocacy work.

What is Evite.com?

Evite is a web-based invitation tool that allows you to easily design invitations, track RSVPs and even solicit donations directly through your invitation — which means that even those who can't attend your party can support Compassion & Choices and our work to expand access to a full range of end-of-life options.

Simply personalize the "Invitation Letter" templates found in the appendix of this toolkit, and copy and paste the text into the body of the Evite email. Then fill in the details of your party, and Evite will guide you through the steps to send your invitation, track RSVPs and send reminders!

Why do I need to send my guests so many reminders?

People are busy, particularly during the holiday and summer months when multiple events compete for their time. As a general rule, for every reminder you send, your attendance will double — so it's worth the time! It's harder to say no in a real conversation, so be prepared to follow up by phone if you don't hear back by Evite.

Is it OK to have the party be just a friend-raiser and not ask for donations?

Yes. But we find that when people donate, even if they give just \$5, they are more likely to become actively involved because they are invested.

How can I get envelopes for donations?

If you plan to use envelopes for donations, contact Development Services at Compassion & Choices (devoservices@CompassionAndChoices.org) to request envelopes.

Where should I send any donations I receive?

Send all of your donations and unused materials as well as your invite and RSVP/check-in lists to Compassion & Choices, Attn: Development Services, Compassion & Choices care of Tylon Data Management, 30 Buck Rd, Hanover, NH 03755.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

Although the goal of this toolkit is to provide you with everything you need to host a house party on behalf of Compassion & Choices, you are not alone! If you live in a state where we have an action team leader, contact your action team leader with questions or for support. Find out if you have an action team leader in your area by visiting CompassionAndChoices.org/near-you and selecting your state. If you do not have an action team leader nearby or would like their contact information, contact volunteer@CompassionAndChoices.org.

See Appendix for Chapter Resources



Care and Choice at the End of Life

APPENDIX

Appendix

Resources for Petitions and Tabling

To print a general petition for your table or canvassing effort, [download a general petition here](#) and customize the petition language on the top to match your local campaign or state of residence.

Tabling Checklist

- ❑ **Select a date and time for your tabling.** Be realistic about how long you can table. We suggest a minimum of two hours and a maximum of six, depending on how many volunteers you have to take shifts.
- ❑ **Set goals.** Based on where you are tabling and how long you'll be there, set a goal for signatures gathered, conversations had and materials distributed — and keep track!
- ❑ **Select a location.** Public parks, popular pedestrian areas and college campuses make great choices for tabling. Sometimes private spaces like malls and shopping centers have great potential as well. Events like street fairs or community festivals are always productive. Farmers markets can be lots of fun!
- ❑ **Obtain necessary permission/permits:** Wherever you decide to table, look into any posted guidelines for setting up a display, or contact the management of the facility or event to get formal permission to table when required.
- ❑ **Recruit at least one tabling partner to join you.** If you are going to table for longer than three hours, you should consider changing shifts and recruiting two more tablers so you can each work a two-hour shift.
- ❑ **Secure a table.** A six-foot table with folding legs is a very standard size, easily transportable and works well for tabling. You can probably borrow one, and they are sold at most home stores. But any lightweight, easy-to-transport table will do.
- ❑ **Assemble a supply box.** Include clipboards (at least four) for petitions, pens (a dozen), a small first-aid kit, inexpensive courtesy gifts like stickers or candy, and materials from Compassion & Choices (quarterly magazine, palm card, local flyer or brochure, promotion for upcoming local events). Look at your goals to make sure you have adequate supplies for the number of folks you want to attract. Add bottled water and snacks for your volunteers before you head to your location.
- ❑ **Check that you have the latest talking points.** Make sure to get the most recent updates from Compassion & Choices. Reach out to your Compassion & Choices contact or visit our Volunteer Resource Center webpage (CompassionAndChoices.org/volunteer-resource-center) for what's new.

- ❑ **Create a visually appealing table.** Use Compassion & Choices-branded materials and your own creativity to bring attention to your table. Use a colorful banner, balloons or other items to draw people to your table and convey your message.

Resources for Drafting a Local Resolution

Sample Draft Resolution

WHEREAS, all people are by nature free and independent and have inalienable rights; and

WHEREAS, [state] has long recognized that adult, terminally ill individuals have a fundamental right to determine their own medical treatment options as they near the end of life, free from coercion and in accordance with their own values, beliefs or personal preferences; and

WHEREAS, advances in science and technology have created medical interventions that often prolong the dying process and increase suffering; and

WHEREAS, terminally ill patients may undergo pain, suffering and an irreversible reduction in their quality of life in their final days, and only the patient can determine whether their suffering is unbearable; and

WHEREAS, “medical aid in dying” is a medical practice specifically authorized in six states and the District of Columbia in which a terminally ill, mentally capable adult with six months or less to live may request a prescription for medication from their physician that they can choose to self-ingest, in the face of unbearable suffering, for a peaceful death; and

WHEREAS, participation in the practice of medical aid in dying by medical providers for terminally ill patients who request this end-of-life option respects and honors patients’ values and priorities for their own death, and puts the patient at the center of their own care; and

WHEREAS, medical aid in dying provides comfort and peace of mind to dying people by providing a safe, compassionate alternative to unnecessary suffering regardless of whether they choose to utilize the law; and

WHEREAS, absent the availability of medical aid in dying, patients in *[name of state]* have become so desperate to relieve suffering caused by terminal illness that they often turn to violent means; and

WHEREAS, A *[year conducted]* public opinion poll by *[name of poll]* found *[% supporting aid in dying]* percent of *[name of state]* adults and *[% supporting aid in dying]* of the state's registered voters agree with the statement: *[insert poll language here]*; and

(NOTE: this can be a national poll if no state-specific poll is available; always use the best poll available for your state).

WHEREAS, medical aid in dying has been safely and successfully implemented in Oregon, and twenty years of reporting and study of medical aid-in-dying practice in Oregon demonstrates the compassion and safety of the practice in upholding a patient's right to self-determination; and

WHEREAS, the two decades of Oregon implementation data shows "no evidence of heightened risk for the elderly, women, the uninsured, people with low educational status, the poor, the physically disabled or chronically ill, minors, people with psychiatric illnesses including depression, or racial or ethnic minorities;"¹ and

WHEREAS, medical aid in dying improves end-of-life care; and in Oregon since implementation, the quality of end-of-life care, pain management and the use of hospice have all greatly improved; and

WHEREAS, well-respected health and medical organizations recognize medical aid in dying as a legitimate end-of-life option for eligible adults facing an imminent death from a terminal illness, including The American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, The American Public Health Association, The American Medical Women's Association, The American Medical Student Association, The American Academy of Legal Medicine, GLMA: Healthcare Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality, and the National Hispanic Council on Aging.

WHEREAS, *[local jurisdiction]* recognizes that the choices a person makes at the end of life should be inalienably grounded in that individual person's own life experience and values; and

WHEREAS, the availability of medical aid in dying provides an additional palliative care option to terminally ill individuals and allows them to live their remaining days to the fullest even when they ultimately choose not utilize aid-in-dying medication.

THEREFORE BE IT NOW RESOLVED, that *[local jurisdiction]* respects the diversity of perspectives on end-of-life decisions; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that *[local jurisdiction]* supports diversity of perspectives on end-of-life decisions; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, *[local jurisdiction]* recognizes the practice of medical aid in dying as a compassionate end-of-life care option for terminally ill, mentally capable adults with six months or less to live; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that *[local jurisdiction]* urges the *[name of state]* Legislature to enact medical aid-in-dying legislation that specifically allows physicians to provide comfort and peace of mind for terminally ill adults who may otherwise endure unbearable suffering; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered and presented to the *[name of state]* Legislature and to the *[office of the district attorney of the county of [name of county]]*.

Resources for Hosting a Screening

Screening Checklist

This worksheet offers a step-by-step guide to hosting an at-home film screening event in your living room, den or even the backyard. Give yourself at least four weeks to plan and promote your event.

Step 1: Plan and Secure (4+ Weeks Prior to Event)

- Select a timeframe for your event (mid-November, early June, etc.).
- Watch the film and review the discussion guide so you are familiar with the content (the film is available to stream on Amazon.com and on DVD either from Netflix or from C&C).
- Email volunteer@compassionandchoices.org and let us know what you are planning.
- Select a date that is not too close to a holiday or local special event (weeknights or weekend afternoons are often ideal).

Step 2: Make Your List (3-4 Weeks Prior to Event)

- Compile your invitation list. Use your own address book; ask friend/colleagues for a list of their friends; ask permission to send an email to your colleagues at work or to organizations to which you belong.

- ❑ Make sure your invitation list is a reasonable size, given how many people you can seat. For an at-home event, perhaps one in four will be able to attend.

Step 3: Promote! (2-3 Weeks Prior to Event)

- ❑ Draft and send an email invitation to your list (online invitation services like Evite and Paperless Post make tracking RSVPs easy).
- ❑ Create and send a Facebook invitation (remember to tag C&C in the invitation and all posts).
- ❑ Create and maintain an RSVP list to track who is coming.

Step 4: Confirm Numbers (3-4 Days Prior to Event)

- ❑ Three or four days prior to the event, send a reminder to everyone you invited, and ask them to RSVP and/or confirm. If you use Evite or Paperless Post, reminders will be sent automatically (and you can set how many days in advance you'd like those reminders to go out).
- ❑ Mention seating is limited.

Step 5: Finish Prep For Screening (2-3 Days Prior to Event)

- ❑ Shop for snacks/pens/tissues/other needed supplies.
- ❑ Draft your event program or agenda (see examples on next page), including any guests invited as experts or speakers (hospice nurse, C&C staff, someone with an end-of-life experience).
- ❑ Print out enough agendas for everyone at your event.
- ❑ Print out materials or handouts you may need for activities (petitions, letter writing).
- ❑ If you are using a DVD, test the DVD in your own DVD player well in advance, in case you need to replace one or the other (sometimes certain DVDs and DVD players just don't work together).

Step 6: Day of Screening

- ❑ Arrange your furniture in the best way for the event, and test your TV and DVD player again.
- ❑ Put out refreshments or reception goodies for your guests before or after the presentation.
- ❑ Put out your materials (agendas, petitions, etc.) and other supplies (pens, tissues).
- ❑ Have a camera/phone at the ready to take some snaps of your event for Facebook and C&C.

Sample Programs

Evening event with the film + discussion and activities:

- 6:00 p.m.** Guests begin arriving; snacks and refreshments are available (circulate petitions and response cards)
- 6:30 p.m.** Welcome from host and introductions
- 6:45 p.m.** Screen first half of "How to Die in Oregon" (about 55 mins)
- 7:45 p.m.** Q&A and discussion with group and/or remarks by special guest
- 8:25 p.m.** Activities, group discussion, mingling ...
- 8:45 p.m.** Screen second half of "How to Die in Oregon"
- 9:45 p.m.** Allow time for your guests to decompress and chat informally about the film
- 10:00 p.m.** Goodnight!

Afternoon event with full-length film screening:

- 1:00 p.m.** Guests begin arriving; snacks and refreshments are available (circulate petitions and response cards)
- 1:30 p.m.** Welcome from host and introductions
- 1:45 p.m.** Featured speaker(s)
- 2:00 p.m.** Watch "How to Die in Oregon" (about 115 mins.)
- 4:00 p.m.** Activities, group discussion, mingling ...
- 4:30 p.m.** Good evening!

Resources for Hosting a House Party

Instructions for Invitation Letter Templates

- 1.** There are three templates for your invitation letter. Select the presentation topic that is most relevant to your statewide priorities and guests' interests.
- 2.** Use the prompts in the highlighted fields below to customize the letter.
- 3.** For paper invitations:
 - a.** Copy and paste the letter templates into a new document and complete the **yellow highlighted fields**.
 - b.** Once you have reviewed for typos and accuracy, print and send to your invite

list.

4. For digital invitations (Evite.com, email):
 - a. Copy and paste the letter templates into a new document and complete the yellow highlighted fields.
 - b. Copy your customized letter and paste into the body of your email or the “message from host” section of your Evite.

Letter for States With Current Legislation

Dear [geographical area] Friends and Neighbors,

[I/We] hope you will join [me/us] for an intimate gathering at [my/our] home on [day of week, month, date and time a.m. or p.m.].

We will be celebrating the efforts of Compassion & Choices, the organization that worked with Brittany Maynard, the terminally ill young woman who moved to Oregon so she could access its medical aid-in-dying law because her state of California didn't allow it at the time. Compassion & Choices is now trying to bring this important option to [state]:

BRIEFING ON CURRENT LEGISLATION IN [STATE NAME]:

[If you are not sure, consult with your contact at Compassion & Choices.]

[Add personal story here and why you support the work of Compassion & Choices.]

Please join [me/us] for this special fundraising and educational gathering to hear what Compassion & Choices is doing to bring medical aid in dying to [state]. [IF APPLICABLE:] I am delighted that [speaker] will join us to discuss [issue] and answer any questions you might have about where we go from here.

Compassion & Choices is fully funded by individuals like you. [My/Our] goal is to raise [indicate amount (suggested: \$1,000 or more)] at [this afternoon's or evening's] event. Will you join [me or us] on [day of week, month, date and time] to learn about the current work we are doing at Compassion & Choices in [state]? [I/We] invite you to donate to [my/our] fundraising efforts. All proceeds will benefit Compassion & Choices and our political campaign efforts to improve care and expand options at the end of life.

Please RSVP, and I will send you my address and parking information. Thank you in advance for your support of Compassion & Choices' work here in [state name], and [I

[we] look forward to seeing you on [month and day].

Warmest regards,
[Host/co-host name]

Letter for Federal Programs

Dear [geographical area] Friends and Neighbors,

[I/We] hope you can join [me/us] at [my/our] home for this special fundraising and education gathering on [day of week, month, date and time].

[I am/We are] delighted to invite you to learn about the federal policy agenda that Compassion & Choices is pursuing in Congress and across federal agencies.

BRIEFING ON COMPASSION & CHOICES' FEDERAL PROGRAMS:

The Institute of Medicine's (IOM) 2014 report *Dying in America* affirmed Compassion & Choices' more than thirty years of experience influencing the healthcare system to provide compassionate, high-quality end-of-life care that respects the dignity and choices of patients and their families. Compassion & Choices' federal policy agenda calls on policymakers in Washington to improve end-of-life care through actions we have identified in the five broad policy areas discussed in the IOM report. Specifically, these include delivery of person-centered, family-oriented care; clinician-patient communication and advance care planning; professional education and development; policies and payment systems; and public education and engagement. Compassion & Choices' federal programs help to make sure that all Americans have access to high quality end-of-life care that aligns with their ideas, goals and values.

[Add personal message/story about why you support Compassion & Choices if you'd like.]

Compassion & Choices is fully funded by individuals like you. [My/Our] goal is to raise [indicate amount (suggested: \$1,000 or more)] at [this afternoon's or evening's] event. Will you join [me/us] on [date and time] to learn about the current work we are doing at Compassion & Choices in [state]? [I/We] invite you to donate to [my/our] fundraising efforts. All proceeds will benefit Compassion & Choices federal programs, which call on lawmakers to pass policies at the federal level that will improve person-centered

care for those with advanced illness and approaching death.

Please RSVP, and I will send you my address and parking information. Thank you in advance for your support of Compassion & Choices' work here in [state name], and [I/We] look forward to seeing you on [month and day].

Warmest Regards,
[Host/co-host name]

Letter for Implementation States

Dear [geographical area] Friends and Neighbors,

[I/We] hope you can join [me/us] at [my/our] home for this special fundraising and education gathering on [day of week, month, date and time].

[I am/We are] delighted to invite you to learn more about Compassion & Choices medical aid-in-dying implementation efforts here in [state name].

BRIEFING ON IMPLEMENTATION:

Authorizing medical aid in dying was an important first step, but our work is not done until everyone has access to the full range of end-of-life options. The state's [new or existing] medical aid-in-dying law allows terminally ill, mentally capable adults facing intolerable suffering to request prescription medication that will enable them to die gently surrounded by family and loved ones, but it does not give them the ability to obtain that prescription. Far too many people can't find supportive doctors or healthcare systems, and others learn about the law too late.

[Add personal message/story about why you support Compassion & Choices if you'd like.]

Through the Compassion & Choices [state] Access Campaign we are educating [state] doctors, caregivers, families and individuals facing end-of-life suffering about the benefits and requirements of the state's medical aid-in-dying law. You can help celebrate the efforts that paved the way for this law and learn how to help make the statewide implementation of the [state] law as successful as possible.

Compassion & Choices is fully funded by individuals like you. [My/Our] goal is to raise [indicate amount (suggested: \$1,000 or more)] at [this afternoon's or evening's] event. Will you join [me/us] on [day of week, month, date and time] to learn about the current work we are doing at Compassion & Choices in [state]? [I/We] invite you to donate to [my/our] fundraising efforts. All proceeds will benefit Compassion & Choices' [state name] implementation efforts.

Please RSVP, and I will send you my address and parking information. Thank you in advance for your support of Compassion & Choices' work here in [state name], and [I/we] look forward to seeing you on [month and day].

Warmest Regards,
[Host/co-host name]

Sign in Sheet Template

[Click this link to download and customize a printable PDF sign up sheet.](#)

House Party Checklist

This worksheet offers a step-by-step guide to producing an at-home screening event in your living room, den or even the backyard. Give yourself at least four weeks to plan and promote your event.

4-6 Weeks Prior to Party

- Develop an invitation list from your personal network, and if you would like to open your party to nearby supporters, contact Compassion & Choices Development Services at devoservices@compassionandchoices.org for more information.
- Start having conversations about your event with your personal network.
- Work with your local Action Team leader or Compassion & Choices point person to confirm a featured speaker or storyteller, if applicable.
- Develop invitation details and message from host using the templates provided in this appendix.
- Mail at least four weeks prior to your event, if using paper invitations.

3-4 Weeks Prior to Party

- Send out Evite.com, email and/or Facebook invitations to your guest list.
- Make arrangements to rent a microphone if you are expecting more than 40 guests.
- Reach out to your Compassion & Choices point of contact to request Compassion & Choices materials if you would like to provide them at your house party.
- Contact Development Services at Compassion & Choices (devoservices@compassionandchoices.org) to request donation envelopes.

2-3 Weeks Prior to Party

- Start confirming and recording RSVPs using the template spreadsheet provided in this appendix.
- Send an Evite, Facebook or email reminder to the invitees who have not yet responded.
- Make personal phone calls to any invitees who have not yet responded.
- Draft an "event program" using the template provided in this appendix.
- Have a meet-and-greet phone conversation with featured speaker (if applicable).
- Arrange to receive short bio on featured speaker (if applicable).
- Arrange for somebody to check guests in on day of event.
- Contact your Compassion & Choices point person to ask whether there are any campaign efforts underway that your guests can support by signing a letter or petition. Request copies of corresponding letters or petitions.
- Rent a microphone if you are expecting more than 40 guests.

One Week Prior to Party

- Send out another Evite or Facebook reminder, and make calls to those who have not yet responded.
- Finalize "event program" using the template provided in this appendix
- Arrange for food and drink (finger foods are great and involve less clean-up).
- Send out Evite, Facebook or email reminder with address and parking information to all guests who RSVP'd yes and maybe.
- Reconfirm with the person who will check in guests at door.
- Purchase printable labels to print name badges.

One Day Prior to Party

- Print check-in list using templates provided in this appendix.
- Print name badges.

- Print a few copies of the “event program” – one each for the host/co-host, featured speaker and individual who is checking in guests.
- Print biography of featured speaker (if applicable).
- Make sure you have the donation envelopes in hand.
- Pick up and test rented microphone (for larger parties).
- Send out Evite, Facebook and email reminder with address and parking information to all guests who RSVP’d yes and maybe.

Day of Party

- Arrange furniture to accommodate guests, host/co-host and featured speaker.
- Set up check-in table at the entrance with name badges, RSVP/check-in list and Compassion & Choices materials (if applicable), and sign support letters/petitions/photo releases (if needed).
- Consider having a tablet or computer for people to use to sign up to volunteer or make donations.
- Prepare refreshments.
- “Train” any volunteers you have on how to sign people in, accept donations or anything else you might need them to do.
- Have host documents (event program, speaker bio if there is a speaker, donation envelopes and talking points) organized and ready to go.
- Have camera/smartphone ready to take pictures for Compassion & Choices.

Sample House Party Timeline

Evening event with the film + discussion and activities:

- 6:00 p.m.** Host/co-host welcomes arriving guests. Designated person checks them in.
- 6:00 p.m.** Guests mingle, meet each other, enjoy food and drinks. Guests are invited to gather for the event program portion of the party.
- 7:00 p.m.** Host/co-host begins the event program, explains why they support Compassion & Choices, tells their story and uses the bio to introduce the featured speaker (if applicable).

The featured speaker gives their presentation (if applicable).

Guests are encouraged to ask questions and engage in conversations about Compassion & Choices.

If comfortable, host/co-host commits to giving a financial gift to Compassion &

Choices and invites guests to follow suit and distributes envelopes.

7:30 p.m. Host/co-host collects envelopes, thanks guests for coming and for their support.

At the host's/co-host's discretion, they may invite guests to stay for more refreshments and conversation.

8:00 p.m. Good night!

Your house party can start at any time, but generally a house party will last about two hours.

Discussion Guide

Advocacy often starts on an intimate, personal level when we share an issue about which we feel passionately with the people we trust most. Watching "How to Die in Oregon" is an excellent way to open up this important conversation with your friends and family.

After watching the film, gather your guests in a circle, and begin to moderate a conversation. The following questions are just suggestions — you know your guests and can decide which areas of the subject matter will work best.

Suggested post-screening discussion questions:

- 1.** What struck you the most watching this film, and did it make you think about death and dying differently?
- 2.** Why do you think death is so hard to talk about openly in our culture?
- 3.** Did you feel that people were fully in control of their decision to take the medication? How would you feel as a loved one witnessing this interaction?
- 4.** Do you think your doctor would support your request for medical aid in dying if you were eligible and the practice was authorized in your state? Do you know what your statewide medical association's position is on medical aid in dying? How might you have a conversation with your doctor about their views on authorizing medical aid in dying and willingness to advocate for it within their medical association?
- 5.** What kind of support do you think there would be in your local city, town or county council? What kinds of barriers do you imagine would make it challenging to get a local resolution or proclamation passed in your community? What are the steps you would need to take to help the movement?
- 6.** How would you interact differently with someone you know who is living with a terminal diagnosis after watching this film? Do you think you would prepare differently for your own death?
- 7.** If you don't support medical aid in dying for yourself, do you feel you can understand and support the decisions of others after watching the film?

Advocacy Activity Guide

After your screening and/or discussion, if time allows you can guide your guests in translating positive energy into some tangible action that could make a difference on these issues. Here are some suggestions for taking solid next steps:

Join a Local Action Team

Before the event, contact your nearest Action Team leader to find out what your team is working on, what type of help they need, and when and where the next meeting takes place. Share that information with your guests and ask them to commit to joining the team and attending the next meeting.

If you don't have a local Action Team already in place, suggest forming a local team and set the date for the next meeting. Compassion & Choices has great resources to help you form an Action Team, so if you decide to start your own team, reach out to your Compassion & Choices point of contact for guidance and materials!

Advance Directive Workshop (about 30 minutes)

Before your event, print out your state's advance directive form and dementia provision from CompassionAndChoices.org/eolc-tools/. After watching the film, break into small groups of two or three people and fill your directives out together. Even if not everyone finishes, it's a great way to take the mystery out of the process and introduce your guests to an important tool.

Take turns sharing with the rest of the group the biggest challenge and the biggest relief that you experience while filling out the form.

Take It Viral With Photos (15 minutes)

Create and print placards for your event that say, "I support medical aid in dying because ..." and leave space for your guests' responses. Break into small groups and fill out the placards together, limiting responses to one sentence. Discuss your responses and take photos of each other holding the placards.

Then, *with your guests' permission*, share the photos on Twitter and Facebook. Remember to tag Compassion & Choices in any post, and add the hashtag #medicalaidindying. Also remember to include @compandchoices when using Twitter.

Speak Out and Be Heard! (15 minutes)

Break into small groups and together draft a letter to your local legislators asking them to support medical aid-in-dying legislation in your state. Use the templates available in this appendix to help you get started.

In addition to drafting your letters, take an opportunity to customize and print a petition using

the [template](#) found in this appendix, have everyone sign it, and offer an extra copy for guests to take home and have their family and friends sign. Ask your guests to return petitions to you so you can send them to your legislator. Always remember to cc: Compassion & Choices.