

The facts about medical aid in dying

Medical aid in dying allows a terminally ill, mentally capable adult to voluntarily request and receive prescription medication from a healthcare provider that they can self-administer to die peacefully, on their own terms.

Who qualifies

To be eligible, an individual must:

- » Be 18 years or older
- » Have at least one healthcare provider diagnose them with a terminal illness
- » Have a prognosis of six months or less to live
- » Be mentally capable of making an informed healthcare decision
- » Be able to self-ingest their medication

Advanced age, disability and chronic health conditions alone are not qualifying factors.

Decision-making capacity is required

- » In order to be eligible for medical aid in dying, a person must be mentally capable of making an informed healthcare decision.
- » The law requires that mental capacity be confirmed before the person receives the prescription.
- » Although a person with dementia will eventually face a six-month-or-less prognosis, the disease's progression will rob them of the ability to make informed decisions.

There are strong safeguards

- » Every state law includes strict safeguards to ensure the choice is voluntary.
- » Any attempt to pressure or coerce someone into requesting or using medical aid in dying is a **felony**.

It is NOT Suicide

- » Medical aid in dying is only an option for adults who are terminally ill with a prognosis of six months or less to live.
- » When medical aid in dying is authorized, it increases the likelihood that a terminally ill person will express their desire to end their life to a medical provider who has the training to evaluate them and connect them to appropriate care and support.

It is NOT euthanasia

- » To qualify, a person must be able to self-administer the medication through an affirmative, conscious, and voluntary act.
- » No one else may administer it.
- » Control of medical aid in dying stays with the terminally ill individual from start to finish.

It is NOT administered by an injection or IV

- » U.S. laws prohibit injections or IV administration.
- » The medication is prescribed as a compound mixture, usually a powder combined with liquid, which the individual self-ingests.

U.S. Laws are NOT the same as international laws

- » All U.S. medical aid in dying laws are only available to qualified terminally ill adults with a prognosis of six months or less to live, who can self-administer the medication.
- » Other countries' laws differ: some allow people who are not terminally ill to qualify, allow the clinician to administer the medication, or operate under a national system.