

AMA's Position on Medical Aid in Dying

From 2016-2019, the American Medical Association (AMA) Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs (CEJA) spent three years reviewing the AMA's historical opposition to the practice of medical aid in dying. In 2019, AMA upheld its oppositional position on medical aid in dying, but key findings were made.

In addition, the AMA affirmed that euthanasia, defined as the administration of lethal medication by the physician for the purpose of relieving suffering, is distinct from medical aid in dying.

On June 11, 2019, a policy position recommended by the Council ([CEJA 2-A-19 Report](#)) was adopted. *For the first time, the AMA affirmed that physicians can provide medical aid in dying "according to the dictates of their conscience without violating their professional obligations."*

Striking a balance, the AMA highlighted two separate provisions of the Medical Code of Ethics as relevant and applicable to medical aid in dying establishing that physicians who participate in medical aid in dying are adhering to their professional, ethical obligations as are physicians who decline to participate. This position allows for, respects and supports the diverse views of the AMA's membership.

According to the AMA CEJA Report adopted by the AMA House of Delegates, "Guidance in the AMA Code of Medical Ethics encompasses the irreducible moral tension at stake for physicians with respect to participating in assisted suicide. Opinion E-5.7 powerfully expresses the perspective of those who oppose physician-assisted suicide. Opinion 1.1.7 articulates the thoughtful moral basis for those who support assisted suicide."