

How to talk to your Doctor about Medical Aid in Dying in New Jersey

Discuss your end-of-life priorities with your medical team now to ensure the options you want will be available to you. Confirm that your doctor will support your choices.

Suggestions for starting the conversation

For those who do not have a terminal illness:

I value quality of life. Should I become terminally ill and no longer able to enjoy living, I would like to have the option of medical aid in dying.

I hope you will honor my decisions and respect my values, as I respect yours. Would you write a medical aid-in-dying prescription in accordance with the law if I qualify? If you will never be willing to honor my request, please tell me now.

For those who do have a terminal illness:

I want to have the authorized option to advance the time of my death if my suffering becomes unbearable.

Am I eligible for medical aid in dying? If yes, will you write a prescription in accordance with the Medical Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act?

If not, will you refer me to a doctor who is willing to write a prescription? If I am not eligible, what will my condition look like when I am eligible?

Medical aid in dying is a safe and trusted medical practice in which a terminally ill, mentally capable adult with a prognosis of six months or less to live may request from his or her doctor a prescription for medication which they can choose to self-ingest to bring about a peaceful death.

No one but you can make this request to your doctor(s). And it is important to ask only your doctor; do not ask your physician's office staff, nurse or physician's assistant, or leave a request on voicemail.

You may mention that Compassion & Choices provides assistance to physicians through our Doc2Doc Program, which offers free, confidential telephone consultation with a seasoned medical director. Please feel free to give your physician our Doc2Doc flier or the Doc2Doc phone number: 1-800-247-7421.

The Medical Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act

To be eligible for medical aid in dying under the Medical Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act, a person must be:

- An adult
- Terminally ill
- Given a prognosis of six months or less to live

→ Mentally capable of making their own healthcare decisions.

In addition, a person must meet the following requirements. They must be:

- A resident of New Jersey
- Acting voluntarily
- Capable of self-administering the medical aid-in-dying medication.

Eligibility to use the law is not the same as eligibility for hospice.

Two New Jersey physicians must confirm eligibility to use the Medical Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act, as well as confirm that you are making an informed decision and voluntarily requesting the medical aid-in-dying medication. The attending physician determines initial eligibility, and the prescribes the medication, and the consulting physician confirms eligibility. The attending physician is the provider who writes the prescription.

You may change your mind at any time. You may at any time withdraw or rescind your request for a prescription for medical aid in dying, and there is no obligation to take the medication once you have it in your possession.

For more information please visit www.CompassionandChoices.org/New-Jersey