


# Medical aid in dying *explained*



## What is medical aid in dying?

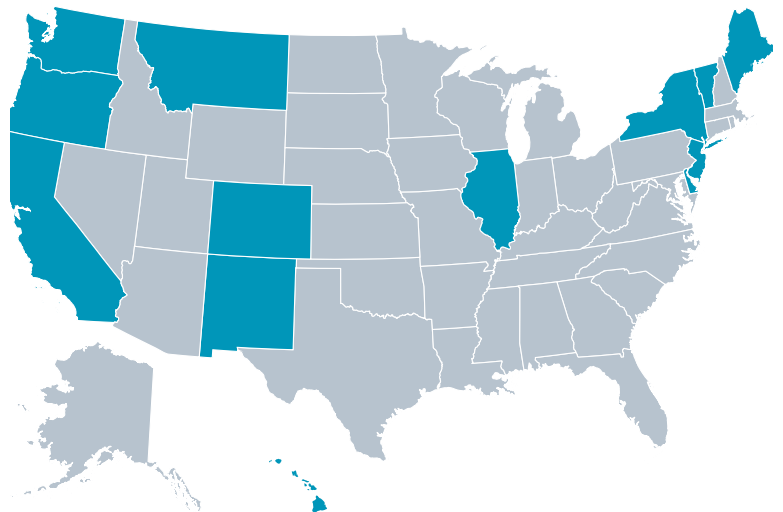


Medical aid in dying allows a terminally ill, mentally capable adult to voluntarily request and receive prescription medication from a healthcare provider that they can self-administer to die peacefully, on their own terms.

## Where it's authorized

Medical aid in dying is currently authorized in **14 U.S. jurisdictions**:

- » Oregon (1994)
- » Washington (2008)
- » Montana (2009)
- » Vermont (2013)
- » California (2015)
- » Colorado (2016)
- » Washington, D.C. (2016)
- » Hawai'i (2018)
- » New Jersey (2019)
- » Maine (2019)
- » New Mexico (2021)
- » Delaware (2025)
- » Illinois (2025)
- » New York (2026)



## 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

## Proven and trusted

- » Medical aid in dying is an established end-of-life healthcare option.
- » Oregon voters approved the nation's first law in 1994, and it took effect in 1997.
- » Experience shows this medical practice works as intended – to empower people while protecting patients and providers.
- » Accessing this care requires a multi-step request process and other requirements to protect individuals against coercion.

## Safeguards

- » Clinicians must discuss all appropriate end-of-life care options, including comfort care, hospice, pain management, and palliative care.
- » The person may change their mind at any time, even after obtaining the medication.
- » Participation is voluntary – no medical provider, institution, or individual is required to take part.

## One choice among many

### Medical aid in dying is one option within a spectrum of end-of-life care that may include:

- » Hospice and palliative care
- » Stopping curative treatment
- » Declining or withdrawing life-sustaining treatment
- » Voluntarily stopping eating and drinking (VSED)

## How Compassion & Choices helps

We work to expand and protect all end-of-life healthcare options – including medical aid in dying, voluntary stopping of eating and drinking, hospice, palliative care, and offer tools for advance care and dementia planning.

Our advocacy ensures patients remain the decision-makers at life's end and that these rights are protected nationwide.



To explore all options for end-of-life care, visit [CompassionAndChoices.org](https://CompassionAndChoices.org)