

History of the movement

For over 30 years, Compassion & Choices has helped build a movement dedicated to ensuring every person can approach the end of life with dignity, options, and a voice.

The movement begins



1967

A right-to-die bill is introduced in the Florida Legislature, arousing extensive debate, but ultimately is unsuccessful.



1971

Hospice, Inc. is founded in the United States.



1980

The Hemlock Society, an end-of-life care organization for those suffering from incurable illnesses, forms. It later evolves into End-of-Life Choices, which in 2005 merges with Compassion in Dying to form Compassion & Choices, the largest organization in the United States advocating for people's rights and care at the end of life.



1988

The Unitarian Universalist Association [adopts a resolution](#) affirming the right to self-determination in dying. It urges congregations to inform and petition legislators to protect the right to die with dignity, under strict legal safeguards.



1990 - 2000



1990

The U.S. Supreme Court rules in [Cruzan v. Director, Missouri Department of Health](#), affirming the right of Americans to refuse unwanted medical treatment and their right to appoint a healthcare proxy to speak for them when they cannot.



1993

Compassion in Dying (CID) is founded by 12 former Hemlock members after the 1991 Washington State aid-in-dying initiative fails. Seeing the urgent need for information and support that many people with AIDS and other terminal illnesses lacks, they establish CID as a 501(c)(3) organization to provide end-of-life guidance and support. CID also begins developing the medical model that becomes medical aid in dying, shaping the framework used today.



1994

Compassion in Dying develops and files two federal lawsuits: [Washington v. Glucksberg and Vacco v. Quill](#), asserting that a mentally capable, terminally ill patient has a right protected by the constitutional guarantees of liberty, privacy, and equal protection to choose aid in dying. The Federal District Court for the Western District of Washington rules that this right exists. The state of Washington appeals the decision to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals



Oregon voters approve the [Oregon Death With Dignity Act](#), a ballot initiative that permits terminally ill patients, under specified standards, to obtain a physician's prescription to shorten the dying process in a humane and dignified manner. The measure passes with 51 percent of the vote.





The Project on Death in America and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Last Acts Campaign invest heavily to address advanced illness and pain, shaping early palliative care through provider-focused research, clinical training, and public education. Due to ideological differences, these coalitions exclude Compassion in Dying from participation. Operating on a parallel track, CID strengthens its role as the consumer voice in end-of-life care by advancing mandatory continuing medical education in pain care, pressing state medical boards to treat undertreated pain as deficient practice, and establishing accountability through landmark cases such as Bergman. This period cements CID's identity as a national leader in patient-directed care.



1996

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (in [Washington v. Glucksberg](#)) and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals (in [Vacco v. Quill](#)) both decide that the U.S. Constitution protects the choice of a capable, terminally ill patient to choose aid in dying. The states of New York and Washington appeal the decisions in the U.S. Supreme Court.



1997

The National Right-to-Life Committee challenges Oregon's Death With Dignity Act, stalling implementation until the challenge is dismissed by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The Oregon Legislature places a measure on the ballot to rescind the law, but it is defeated by 60 percent of voters. Later that year, Compassion in Dying client, "Helen" becomes the first person to use the law to die peacefully.



In [Washington v. Glucksberg](#) and [Vacco v. Quill](#), the U.S. Supreme Court declines to find federal constitutional protection for medical aid in dying and refers the issue to the states. However, the Court recognizes a federal constitutional right for dying patients to receive as much pain medication as necessary to obtain relief, even if this advances time of death.



**1998**

In February, Compassion in Dying launches a nationwide initiative urging state medical boards to discipline physicians for undertreating pain, especially for terminally ill patients. This work leads to major legislative wins, including California's AB 487 (1999), which requires all physicians to complete mandatory continuing medical education in pain management and the care of terminally ill and dying patients. CID helps advance a similar mandate in New York, further establishing pain management as a core standard of competent medical practice.

**1999**

Compassion in Dying begins educating the public about voluntary stopping eating and drinking (VSED) as an end-of-life option and integrates guidance on VSED into its End-of-Life Consultation (EOLC) program.



2000-2010



2001

Compassion & Choices represents the Bergman family of California in bringing the nation's first case to claim that failure to treat pain adequately constitutes elder abuse, winning a \$1.5 million verdict for patient's pain and suffering. The case establishes that failure to treat pain adequately can expose healthcare providers to significant financial liability.



2002

Attorney General John Ashcroft issues a directive in 2001 to prevent the Oregon Death With Dignity Act from being implemented. The state of Oregon sues to stop the directive, joined by a group of terminally ill Oregonians and represented by Compassion & Choices. Federal District Court Judge Robert E. Jones in [Oregon v. Ashcroft](#) rules against the Ashcroft directive rebuking the federal government for its attempt to "stifle an ongoing, earnest and profound debate in the various states" concerning aid in dying.



2003

Barbara Coombs Lee, president of Compassion in Dying Federation (and later the first CEO of Compassion & Choices) publishes *Compassion in Dying: Stories of Dignity and Choice*.



Beginning in 2003 and continuing through 2013, Compassion in Dying/Compassion & Choices works with MergerWatch to challenge Catholic hospital mergers that threaten patient access to end-of-life options. As Catholic healthcare systems expand and impose strict prohibitions on intentional death C&C works to block restrictive consolidations, defend community hospitals, and uphold patient-directed care.





2004

The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirms the district court's ruling in [Oregon v. Ashcroft](#) in a 2-1 decision, rejecting Attorney General Ashcroft's argument. The federal government appeals the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court.



2005

The Hemlock Society, after rebranding as End-of-Life Choices in 2003, merges with the Compassion in Dying Federation to form Compassion & Choices. The merger combines grassroots advocacy for medical aid in dying, pain management and other end of life care and options with direct client support and end-of-life planning, uniting two major forces in the movement to expand and protect end-of-life options in the United States.



2006

Medical associations begin to adopt policies supporting aid in dying, including the American Women's Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, and the American Medical Student Association.



The Supreme Court rules 6-3 in [Gonzales v. Oregon](#) (formerly *Oregon v. Ashcroft*), affirming Oregon's Death with Dignity Act and rejecting the attorney general's attempt to use the Controlled Substances Act to nullify it, leaving Oregon's law fully intact. "The ruling remains a landmark victory for end-of-life rights. "This is a watershed decision for freedom and democracy in the U.S.," said Barbara Coombs Lee, president of Compassion & Choices. "It reaffirms the liberty, dignity, and privacy Americans cherish at the end of life."



2007

In October, two terminally ill Montana residents ([Robert Baxter](#) and Steven Stoel), four Montana doctors, and Compassion & Choices file a complaint asking the district court to state that medical aid in dying was permitted by statute or, in the alternative,



to rule that prosecuting a physician for providing a prescription for medical aid in dying to a consenting patient was unconstitutional.



In September, Compassion & Choices releases its first national dementia provision that can be attached to any state's advance directive for documenting care preferences in the event of cognitive decline.



2008

Compassion & Choices publishes Principles for Patient Centered End-of-Life Care. Based on more than 25 years of practical experience in end-of-life care and advocacy, Compassion & Choices publishes this comprehensive framework outlining what high-quality, patient-directed end-of-life care should look like. The Principles drive the care and advocacy Compassion & Choices advances in transforming end-of-life care.



In September, California becomes the first state in the nation to grant terminally ill patients the legal right to receive information, upon request, from their doctors about the full range of end-of-life care options. The landmark legislation, known as the [Terminal Patients' Right to Know End-of-Life Options Act](#), is championed by Compassion & Choices and signed into law by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger with support from the California Medical Association (CMA).



On November 4, Washington voters overwhelmingly approve by ballot measure the [Death With Dignity Act](#) by a margin of 59 to 41 percent. Washington becomes the second state to authorize medical aid in dying.



On December 5, in the [Baxter](#) case brought by Compassion & Choices in 2007, Montana District Court Judge Dorothy McCarter holds that the Montana Constitution protects a peaceful death with dignity, making Montana the third state to clearly authorize medical aid in dying. The Montana attorney general appeals the case and it heads to the Montana Supreme Court.





National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD) is founded by Nathan Kottkamp. Compassion & Choices becomes an active participant and promoter, offering the public a robust website with national and state-specific resources for advance care planning.



2009

On December 31, in [Baxter v. Montana](#) the Montana Supreme Court rules 5-2 in favor of the landmark case brought by Compassion & Choices, affirming that it is not against Montana public policy for a physician to provide medical aid in dying to a mentally capable, terminally ill individual.



Compassion & Choices publishes the "Good-to-Go" Toolkit, the first national end-of-life planning guide built around an individual's values and priorities. A precursor to today's [End-of-Life Decisions Guide and Toolkit](#), it includes worksheets, advance-directive forms, dementia addenda, and conversation guides. Its online companion creates one of the earliest digital hubs for end-of-life planning, offering a national registry with direct access to every state's advance directive laws and forms, as well as tools for creating electronic files for clinicians.



Compassion & Choices publishes the first educational brochure on Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED) for the general public, along with a best-practice manual for those considering the option. These materials outline the process, risks, and safeguards.



Compassion & Choices produces Dignity & Choices, the first International Symposium on End-of-Life Advocacy, convening more than 100 legislators, policymakers, and experts in healthcare, medicine, and law during debate surrounding passage of the Affordable Care Act. The effort seeks to secure a Medicare billing code for healthcare provider reimbursement for advance care planning conversations.



2010

New York passes the [Palliative Care Information Act \(PCIA\)](#) in August. The law, drafted by Compassion & Choices and modeled after a similar measure it passed in



California, requires healthcare workers to provide information and counseling on end-of-life options.

2011 - 2020



2011

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issues its first official statement condemning medical aid in dying. Compassion & Choices responds by holding a press conference on the same day, in the same building, refuting the USCCB's false claims throughout national media.



Award-winning documentary about Oregon's Death With Dignity Act, *How to Die in Oregon* is released, featuring Compassion & Choices volunteers and clients.



Launch of the "Peace at Life's End - Anywhere" national campaign to ensure that residents of assisted living facilities and nursing homes can access Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED) as a lawful end-of-life option. The campaign includes a national education initiative for facility associations, administrators, and staff on how to support residents who choose VSED. As part of this work, Compassion & Choices develops the first Rider to Residential Agreements for assisted living facilities to guarantee residents can pursue their end-of-life choices without risking eviction. This marks the first coordinated national effort to protect VSED access for people living in residential care settings.





2012

Compassion & Choices becomes a member of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the nation's premier coalition promoting and protecting civil and human rights in the United States.



Compassion & Choices produces the first national conference for end-of-life care and options bringing together over 500 supporters, volunteers, advocates, legislators, community leaders and services providers to advance services and strategies to help people get the care they want.



The ACLU of New Mexico and Compassion & Choices file *Morris v. New Mexico* in the Second Judicial District Court on behalf of surgical oncologist Dr. Katherine Morris, oncologist Dr. Aroop Mangalik, and cancer patient Aja Riggs, seeking to clarify that New Mexico's assisted suicide statute does not apply to medical aid in dying. The case is later renamed [Morris v. Brandenburg](#) as it advances through the courts.



2013

On May 20, Vermont becomes the fourth state to authorize aid in dying and the first in the nation to do so through the legislature with passage of the [Vermont Patient Choice and Control at the End of Life Act](#).



Compassion & Choices launches the Campaign to End Unwanted Medical Treatment, uniting more than 20 national organizations to reform end-of-life care and advance fully informed, patient-directed decision-making.



2014

New Mexico Second Judicial District Judge Nan Nash rules in favor of the plaintiffs in *Morris v. New Mexico*, finding that terminally ill, mentally competent patients have a fundamental right to medical aid in dying under the New Mexico Constitution and that prosecuting a physician for providing it would be unconstitutional. The ruling protects the practice from prosecution in Bernalillo County. The district attorney and attorney general appeal.





A Pennsylvania judge dismisses all charges against [Barbara Mancini](#), who was arrested for handing her dying father his prescribed morphine while he was receiving home hospice care. Compassion & Choices' advocacy around the case sparks a nationwide conversation on end-of-life autonomy.



The National Academy of Medicine (formerly Institute of Medicine) releases *Dying in America: Improving Quality and Honoring Individual Preferences Near the End of Life*. Compassion & Choices testified in its preparation, conducted educational briefings and commissioned policy papers in support of the report's recommendations.



[Brittany Maynard \(1984-2014\)](#), a terminally ill 29-year-old Californian, [releases a video](#) as part of a transformative joint campaign with Compassion & Choices to expand access to medical aid in dying in California and nationwide. The video garners 9 million views in its first three weeks on YouTube, and coverage from every major news outlet catalyzes not only a nationwide conversation on death with dignity but more than two dozen aid-in-dying bills introduced in state legislatures around the country.



2015

U.S. Senators Mark Warner (D-VA) and Johnny Isakson (R-GA) introduce the bipartisan Care Planning Act of 2015, which would create a Medicare benefit allowing people facing serious illness to document their treatment goals with their doctor. Compassion & Choices endorses and advocates for the legislation.



On August 11, the New Mexico Court of Appeals rules that there is no fundamental right to medical aid in dying under the state constitution, reversing a 2014 district court decision.



On October 5, California becomes the fifth state to authorize medical aid in dying by passing the [End of Life Option Act](#) and is signed by Gov. Jerry Brown.



The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services issues a rule to reimburse doctors for advance planning and end-of-life conversations after successful advocacy by Compassion & Choices and other aging and healthcare organizations.





[Allyne Hammer](#) (1942-2023), a longtime community and LGBTQ+ activist, joins Compassion & Choices during the campaign to pass California's End of Life Option Act and later serves on the LGBTQ+ Leadership Council and Santa Cruz Action Team.



2016

On November 8, Colorado becomes the sixth state to authorize medical aid in dying by passing the [End-of-Life Options Act](#).



On November 15, The District of Columbia becomes the seventh jurisdiction in the U.S. where medical aid in dying is authorized after the D.C Council passed the [D.C. Death with Dignity Act](#) by a veto-proof 11-2 margin. The bill is signed by Mayor Muriel Bowser on December 20. Compassion & Choices led the effort to block congressional interference and an attempt to overturn the bill shortly after its passage.



[Miguel Carrasquillo](#) (1980-2016), dies at age 35 from an aggressive form of brain cancer in June of 2016. He becomes Compassion & Choices' first Latino advocate urging his fellow Latinos to support giving terminally ill adults the option of medical aid in dying. His mother, [Nilsa Centeno](#), continues to advocate for medical aid in dying.



Compassion & Choices launches the Truth in Treatment program, a consumer-driven initiative addressing incomplete or biased medical information by promoting full, honest discussions of treatment options and quality-of-life tradeoffs.



2017

In Congress, Compassion & Choices secures its first federal legislative win in a decade by defeating a Resolution of Disapproval targeting D.C.'s medical aid-in-dying law.



Compassion & Choices establishes [African-American](#) and [Latino Leadership](#) Councils, bringing together leaders in the movement to help address disparities at the end of life. Together, these councils shape Compassion & Choices' inclusive movement for end-of-life options grounded in autonomy, equity, and respect.





Compassion & Choices expands its Truth in Treatment initiative with the introduction of the [Diagnosis Decoder](#) and companion Cancer Decoder, research-based tools that help seriously ill patients ask clearer questions and make fully informed treatment decisions. This patient-guided framework later becomes the foundation for developing the Dementia Values & Priorities Tool. These additions were the result of a merger with DeathWise, a nonprofit that helps people plan for the end of their lives with interactive online tools and resources.



2018

On February 1, Kim Callinan is promoted from Chief Program Officer to CEO of Compassion & Choices.



On April 5, Hawai'i becomes the eighth state in the U.S. to authorize medical aid in dying with the passage of the [Our Care, Our Choice Act](#). The law is 20 years in the making, and passes the Hawai'i House of Representatives with a vote of 39-12, and the Senate with a vote of 23-2. The Our Care, Our Choice Act is signed by Gov. David Ige.



The American Medical Association rejected its Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs' recommendation to reaffirm the organization's longtime opposition.



In California, a Riverside County judge rules to invalidate the California End of Life Option Act. [Compassion & Choices files a motion with the judge to vacate the decision](#). When he rejects that motion, Compassion & Choices files a notice of appeal with the appellate court which results in the law's reinstatement.



The American Academy of Family Physicians adopts a policy of "engaged neutrality" toward medical aid in dying and rejected the term "assisted suicide."



Members of the African American Leadership Council meet with the Congressional Black Caucus to advocate for protections for D.C.'s law and increased attention to end-of-life care disparities.





2019

On April 12, New Jersey becomes the ninth jurisdiction in the U.S. to authorize medical aid in dying when Governor Phil Murphy signs the [Medical Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act](#) into law.



On June 12, Maine becomes the tenth jurisdiction to authorize medical aid in dying when Governor Janet Mills signs the [Death with Dignity Act](#) into law.



Compassion & Choices Founder, President Emerita and Senior Adviser Barbara Coombs Lee publishes her second book, [Finish Strong: Putting Your Priorities First at Life's End](#), about transforming the end-of-life experience through education and empowerment.



Civil rights icon Dolores Huerta joins Compassion & Choices to launch the “[End of Life Options FOR ALL](#)” bilingual education campaign, supporting medical aid-in-dying efforts in New Mexico, Nevada, New Jersey, and New York.



[Dan Winter](#), diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's, begins working with Compassion & Choices in 2019 to spotlight the power of advance care planning for individuals facing cognitive decline.



The [Healthcare Advisory Council](#) is formed. An interdisciplinary collective of healthcare professionals with broad experience supporting end-of-life care across the country. The council's clinical expertise helps shape education, policy, and programmatic work, ensuring Compassion & Choices remains grounded in the realities of modern healthcare practice.





2020

In response to myriad challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, Compassion & Choices develops a free comprehensive [COVID-19 Toolkit](#) in both English and Spanish; launches a virtual Staying Stronger Together webinar series addressing an array of topics including end-of-life planning, virtual advocacy and medical aid in dying; and helped secure critical provisions in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, including improvements to telehealth laws, ensuring safe and equitable access to care for terminally ill patients without the health risks of in-person visits.



Compassion & Choices Launches a nationwide campaign to help people prepare in advance for a dementia diagnosis, including our free online dementia planning tools – the [Dementia Values and Priorities Tool](#) and the Dementia Decoder.



What was originally called the “Good-to-Go Toolkit” is officially relaunched under the new name "[My End-of-Life Decisions: An Advance Planning Guide & Toolkit](#)." This updated resource includes values reflections, advance directive forms, planning worksheets, and conversation tools to help individuals articulate priorities, choose a healthcare proxy, and prepare for meaningful end-of-life care.



Compassion & Choices joins the inaugural session of City of Hope’s Interdisciplinary End-of-Life Symposium series. The webinar, “The Actively Dying Patient,” explores clinical, emotional, and institutional aspects of caring for people approaching the end of life – emphasizing communication, psychosocial support, and bereavement care – and marks the beginning of an ongoing collaboration to bring patient-directed perspectives and advance-care expertise to clinicians and caregivers.



The National Black Caucus of State Legislators passes a resolution recognizing persistent disparities in end-of-life care affecting Black communities and encouraging individuals and families to engage in comprehensive advance care planning.



[Deb Robertson](#), a terminal neuroendocrine cancer patient and retired social worker, begins publicly advocating for medical aid in dying with Compassion & Choices. A dedicated volunteer and member of the LGBTQ+ Leadership Council, she becomes a visible voice in the movement to authorize end-of-life options in Illinois.





On December 8, with in-person gatherings halted by COVID-19, Compassion & Choices transforms its annual signature event into its first global virtual gala, drawing more than 1,000 RSVPs from 46 states, Canada, and Poland.

2021 - present



2021

On April 9, New Mexico becomes the 11th jurisdiction to pass a medical aid-in-dying law with Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's signing. [New Mexico's law featured a number of provisions that make it more accessible than prior states.](#)



[Andrew Flack](#) (1988-2022), a 33-year-old special education teacher from Illinois living with stage IV colorectal cancer, becomes a Compassion & Choices champion to advocate for access to medical aid in dying. After relocating to California – where the option was legal – Andrew uses his platform, including *The Death with Dignity Podcast*, to share his journey and educate others.



Rev. Dr. Paul Smith is honored as the inaugural recipient of the award named in his honor, recognizing his leadership at the vanguard of efforts to improve end-of-life options for all. The award celebrates faith leaders whose work advances dignity, compassion, and autonomy at life's end.





Compassion & Choices establishes the [AANHPI Leadership Council](#) to address cultural and linguistic barriers in end-of-life planning.



Compassion & Choices establishes the Faith Leadership Council, a national interfaith network of clergy, chaplains, and lay leaders dedicated to advancing compassionate end-of-life education.



The NAACP adopts a national resolution acknowledging that “African American disparities extend to the end-of-life process and planning.” The resolution urges families to educate themselves about advance directives, healthcare proxies, organ donation, wills, trusts, powers of attorney, and end-of-life options such as hospice, palliative care, and a physician-assisted peaceful transition. It further resolves that the NAACP will provide education, guidance, and proactive advocacy to ensure that all people have access to meaningful information and options when planning for the end of life.



The Center for Black Health & Equity issues a resolution affirming that end-of-life disparities are part of broader systemic inequities facing African Americans.



On November 4, Compassion & Choices convenes the [Addressing Inequities in End-of-Life Planning & Care summit](#). Participants include leaders in palliative care, hospice, primary care, emergency medicine, and advocates focused on racial justice, health equity, and LGBTQ+ end-of-life support.



2022

January 2022, Compassion & Choices secures a landmark victory with the settlement of [Almerico v. Idaho](#), a federal lawsuit challenging an Idaho law that voided the living wills, or advance directives, of all pregnant people.



Compassion & Choices works with its partners at Patient Choices Vermont to amend the state’s medical aid-in-dying law to allow patients to request medical aid-in-dying medication using telehealth, pharmacists, and other medical professionals. Additionally, we eliminated a provision requiring a mandatory 48-hour waiting period between the final request from the patient and the physician’s ability to write a prescription.





In October, Compassion & Choices files [Gideonse v. Brown](#) which challenges the residency requirement for medical aid in dying under Oregon's Death with Dignity law. As a part of the resulting settlement, Oregon authorities agreed not to enforce the state residency restriction for medical aid in dying and to urge the state legislature to formally remove it from the law. Building off our victory in Gideonse, we filed a lawsuit, [Bluestein v. Scott](#), challenging the residency requirement in Vermont's medical aid-in-dying law.



[Wendy Soderlund](#), a retired psychiatric nurse diagnosed with early-stage dementia, becomes a vocal advocate for Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED) as a means of maintaining control over her end-of-life experience.



Dolores Huerta receives the inaugural Dolores Huerta award named in her honor, recognizing her decades of civil rights leadership and her advocacy to expand end-of-life care options for Latino communities.



[Compassion & Choices LGBTQ+ Leadership Council](#) is established to elevate and empower LGBTQ+ voices in end-of-life care. The council focuses on addressing barriers to equitable care and strengthening partnerships to ensure LGBTQ+ individuals can plan for end-of-life in ways that reflect their values and identities.



Compassion & Choices launches the [National Emergency & Palliative Medicine Initiative \(NEPMI\)](#) to help emergency departments nationwide incorporate primary palliative care into their standard practice.



Compassion & Choices launches a Ventanilla de Salud pilot program in partnership with the Institutes of Mexicans Abroad and the Secretariat of Health of Mexico, implemented through Mexican consulates in the United States. The partnership expands access to advance care planning tools and patient-directed end-of-life information for Latino immigrant communities that rely on consulates as trusted health-access points.



[Catholics for Compassion](#) forms as a network of Catholic advocates committed to expanding end-of-life options for individuals with terminal illnesses.





2023

On August 29, Compassion & Choices [files a federal lawsuit](#) on behalf of cancer patients in Delaware and Pennsylvania and two New Jersey doctors asserting the residency mandate in New Jersey's medical aid-in-dying law violates the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal treatment.



Compassion & Choices releases an enhanced [Dementia Values & Priorities Tool](#) which was redesigned based on input from volunteers, focus groups, and clinical experts. The new version is now fully interactive and password-free, aligned with their Advance Care Planning Toolkit and POLST/MOST forms, and includes in-line plain-language videos.



Compassion & Choices establishes the [Allyne Hammer Excellence in Advocacy Award](#) to honor volunteers advancing end-of-life care options in their communities. The first recipients are Doris Fischer of Montana and Rosalind Kipping of Maryland, recognized for their dedication and impact; the award is named in memory of Allyne Hammer's decades of advocacy.



September 19, The Compassion & Choices African American Leadership Council hosts "[The Journey Home: A Comprehensive Discussion on the Power of Planning](#)" summit in Washington, D.C., with virtual participation. The event aimed to empower nearly 1,000 attendees with tools and insights for end-of-life and advance-care planning.



2024

On June 5, Colorado Governor Jared Polis signs the [improved End-of-Life Options Act](#) into law.



Dr. Jeff Gardere, nationally known psychologist, interfaith minister, and media personality, is appointed to the Compassion & Choices Board of Directors.



[José Alejandro Lemuz](#) (1963-2024) a Honduran-American with terminal prostate cancer, publicly declares his intention to use California's End of Life Option Act, becoming the first Latino in the U.S. to do so.





The Latinx National Task Force adopts a shared resolution with Compassion & Choices to strengthen culturally and linguistically appropriate end-of-life education for Latino communities.



2025

On May 20, Gov. Matt Meyer signs [House Bill 140, the Ron Silverio/Heather Block Delaware End-of-Life Options Act](#) into law, making Delaware the 12th U.S. jurisdiction to authorize medical aid in dying and affirm the right of terminally ill adults to peacefully end their lives on their own terms.



On June 6, Kevin Díaz, previously Compassion & Choices' Chief Legal Advocacy Officer and interim CEO since September 2024, is officially appointed as President & CEO.



On December 12, medical aid in dying is authorized in Illinois when Gov. Pritzker signs SB 1950, the End-of-Life Options for Terminally Ill Patients Act. Also known as "Deb's Law" for Compassion & Choices champion Deb Robertson.



2026

On February 6, Governor Hochul signs legislation S.138/A.136 into law, [authorizing medical aid in dying in the state of New York](#). New York becomes the 14th U.S. jurisdiction to authorize medical aid in dying.

