



We refuse to be invisible

**MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
Medical Aid in Dying**

SAGE, the world's largest organization dedicated to improving the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) elders, supports the work of Compassion & Choices across the nation that will allow terminally ill, mentally capable adults the option to request, obtain, and take medication that will allow them to die peacefully if suffering becomes unbearable.

LGBT elders face pronounced rates of social isolation, poverty, and a lack of access to culturally competent services and supports. Many are disconnected from families of origin, have thin support networks, and are disproportionately dependent upon families of choice – non-familial support – when facing terminal illness. After facing a lifetime of stigma and discrimination, LGBT older people know all too well the importance of personal autonomy and the need to be able to make personal decisions, guided by their own moral compass, not that of others.

Equipping members of the LGBT community with information to plan and discuss all healthcare options with their support systems, physicians, and healthcare providers is critical. We learned this in the 1980s and 1990s during the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis. Within our LGBT community, many elders are haunted by the memory of loved ones suffering from HIV/AIDS, for whom aid-in-dying became all the more important. In the shadow of the epidemic, advocates pushed to allow same-sex partners to act as healthcare proxies for one another, despite the lack of legal recognition of same-sex marriage at that time – once again demonstrating that the LGBT and end-of-life options movements are deeply intertwined.

Both SAGE and Compassion and Choices support a society that empowers everyone to choose end-of-life care that reflects their values, priorities, and beliefs. We are committed to ensuring that LGBT elders get full access to self-affirming care, and that addressing end-of-life terminal illnesses be left in the hands of patients, empowered by self-determination.