

DEATH WITH DIGNITY POLICY
Wenatchee Hospice, LLC dba Advanced Hospice Northwest of Wenatchee

PURPOSE

In accordance with the Washington Death with Dignity Act (RCW 70.245), Advanced Hospice Northwest of Wenatchee recognizes the patient's right to request a prescription for a life-ending dose of medication to end his or her life. The Death with Dignity Act allows terminally ill adults seeking to end their life to request lethal doses of medication from medical and osteopathic physicians. The act relates to this agency in that it involves the self-administration of medication in the person's home environment

Definitions related to the Death with Dignity Act and this policy:

1. Adult means an individual who is 18 years of age or older.
2. Competent means that, in the opinion of a court or in the opinion of the patient's attending physician or consulting physician, psychiatrist or psychologist, a patient has the ability to make and communicate an informed decision to health care providers, including communication through persons familiar with the patient's manner of communicating if those persons are available.
3. Self-Administer means a qualified patient's act of ingesting medication to end his or her life in a humane and dignified manner.
4. Qualified patient means a competent adult who is a resident of Washington state and has satisfied the requirements under the Washington Death with Dignity Act in order to obtain a prescription for medication that the qualified patient may self-administer to end his or her life in a humane and dignified manner.
5. Terminal disease means an incurable and irreversible disease that has been medically confirmed and will, within reasonable medical judgment, produce death within six months.
6. Washington Death with Dignity Act medication means any medication that is prescribed under Washington Death with Dignity Act for the purpose of ending the patient's life.

POLICY

This policy is designed to provide guidelines for staff caring for a patient who expresses interest in proceeding with The Washington Death with Dignity Act, RCW 70.245.

Giving patients general information about their available options under the Washington Death with Dignity law is to be distinguished from activities directly related to the delivery, ingestion, or direct facilitation of life-ending activities under the act.

It is the policy of Advanced Hospice Northwest of Wenatchee that it respects the right of both employees and patients to determine whether they wish to participate in actions defined in this policy about the Death with Dignity Act.

PROCEDURE

1. Hospice will continue to provide care and support to patients who qualify for Hospice services regardless of their stated interest or intent of pursuing Washington Death with Dignity.
2. The Hospice RN/MSW will provide information to the patient and family about Washington Death with Dignity Act. This may include information from End of Life Washington.
3. Upon request, the Hospice RN/MSW may make a referral to End of Life Washington regarding patient interest in Washington Death with Dignity.
4. Hospice Staff will not provide, deliver, or assist with medications intended for Washington Death with Dignity.
5. Hospice staff may not be present in the home when a patient ingests Washington Death with Dignity medication.
6. Should a staff member arrive at the home of a patient in the course of a regularly scheduled visit and finds one of the two scenarios, (1) the patient has taken the medication but is not dead, or (2) the patient has taken the medication and died, the staff member provides appropriate quality hospice care.
7. If a staff member requests not to work with a patient pursuing Washington Death with Dignity, another staff will be assigned to the patient to offer hospice care. If no other staff member is available to provide the needed care, the staff member currently caring for the patient will provide the necessary care until alternative staffing can be arranged.
8. A staff member's beliefs and choice of as it relates to the Washington Death with Dignity Act or choosing not to participate in a patient's care based on this belief system will not be part of his/her performance evaluation.
9. Advanced Hospice Northwest of Wenatchee will not provide any funds/resources related to the facilitation of Washington Death with Dignity or paying for any medication that will be used to end a patient life.

Hospice Policies Regarding the Washington State Death with Dignity Act

In accordance with SB 5179 (Laws of 2023), the purpose of this form is to provide the public with information about which Death with Dignity Act-related services are and are not generally available at each hospice agency.
Please contact the hospice agency directly if you have questions about services that are available.

Hospice name: **Advanced Hospice NW of Wenatchee**

Physical address: **285 Technology Center Way, Suite 108**

City: **Wenatchee**

State: **WA**

Zip Code: **98801**

Hospice contact: **Joel Stephens**

Contact phone #: **(509) 663-9585**

Washington State Death with Dignity (DWD) Act

Pursuant to the DWD Act, RCW 70.245.190, individual providers, staff, and facilities may choose whether or not to participate in the DWD Act. "Participate" means to perform the duties of the attending (prescribing) qualified medical provider, the consulting qualified medical provider, or to take part in other activities as described below.

All hospice agencies provide symptom management and after-death support.

The items below describe the above-listed hospice agency's provision of specific DWD Act-related support.

Medical Provider Participation in DWD Act

- For any given patient, Hospice medical providers may participate as both Attending (prescribing) and Consulting providers.
- For any given patient, Hospice medical providers may participate as either Attending (prescribing) or Consulting provider, but not both.
- Hospice medical providers may participate as Consulting providers only.
- Hospice medical providers do not participate as either Attending (prescribing) or Consulting providers.

Hospice Staff/Volunteer Presence During Ingestion

- Hospice staff/volunteers may be present in the patient room at the time of ingestion.
- Hospice staff/volunteers may not be present in the patient room at the time of ingestion but may be present in the patient residence at time of ingestion.
- Hospice staff/volunteers may not be present in the patient residence at the time of ingestion.

Hospice Staff/Volunteer Presence Following Ingestion

- As above, Hospice staff/volunteers may be present during ingestion, and may also be present following ingestion.
- Hospice staff/volunteers may be present only after ingestion.
- Hospice staff/volunteers may be present only after the patient has died.

Hospice Staff/Volunteer Medication Transport

- Hospice staff/volunteers may transport DWD Act medications from the pharmacy to the patient's residence.
- Hospice staff/volunteers may not transport DWD Act medications from the pharmacy to the patient's residence.

Hospice Staff/Volunteer Witnessing of Written Request

- Hospice staff/volunteers may witness a patient's written request for medication that the patient may self-administer to end their life.
- Hospice staff/volunteers may not witness a patient's written request for medication that the patient may self-administer to end their life.

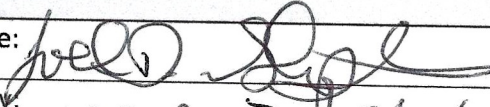
Hospice Staff/Volunteer Medication Preparation

- Hospice staff/volunteers may assist with medication preparation for a patient to self-administer.
- Hospice staff/volunteers may not assist with medication preparation.

Hospice Staff Placement of Rectal Catheter for Purpose of Administration of DWD Medications

- If necessary, Hospice staff may place a rectal catheter for the purpose of self-administration of DWD medications.
- Hospice staff may not place a rectal catheter for the purpose of self-administration of DWD medications.

Please see next page for additional comments.

Signature: 

Signed by: **Joel D. Stephens**

Date: **6/30/2024**