

Model Policy: Allow Participation

Hospitals may modify this policy as appropriate for their facilities. The policy should be adopted in consultation with hospital counsel.

[HOSPITAL NAME]

POLICY NO:

WASHINGTON DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT/INITIATIVE 1000 – PROVIDERS
MAY CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE

[HOSPITAL] allows its providers to participate in the “Washington State Death with Dignity Act,” if they so choose. This means providers at [HOSPITAL NAME] may [include those that are there]:

- Perform the duties of an attending physician;
- Perform the duties of a consulting physician;
- Prescribe life-ending medication;
- Provide counseling in connection with the provision of life-ending medication;
- Fill a prescription for life-ending medication; and/or
- Perform other duties as provided for in the Act.

If any [HOSPITAL] provider participates in the “Washington State Death with Dignity Act” with a patient of this hospital, that provider must immediately notify [HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION POSITION]. It is the provider’s responsibility to ensure the correct procedures are followed and the correct documentation is completed in accordance with the Act and hospital policy. The steps included in the attached checklist should be followed carefully and documented appropriately.

Hospital administration may provide oversight and may review records to the extent necessary to ensure all the safeguards of the law have been followed and the required documentation completed and submitted to the Department of Health.

[HOSPITAL] does not mandate that any provider participate in the “Washington State Death with Dignity Act,” nor encourage any provider to do so. Only those providers who are willing and desire to participate should do so.

Life-ending medication is generally intended to be taken outside the hospital setting. While [HOSPITAL] allows its providers to participate, it may prohibit patients from taking the medication at the hospital (if you do not fill the prescription). [HOSPITAL] has decided for patient safety reason not to stock life-ending medication. While patients may receive a prescription from [HOSPITAL] providers, it must be filled elsewhere.

While participating in the act, any provider at [HOSPITAL] must ensure the appropriate standard of care is followed.

All providers at [HOSPITAL] are expected to respond to any patient's query about life-ending medication with openness and compassion. [HOSPITAL] believes our providers have an obligation to openly discuss the patient's concerns, unmet needs, feelings, and desires about the dying process. Providers should seek to learn the meaning behind the patient's questions and help the patient understand the range of available options, including but not limited to comfort care, hospice care, and pain control. Ultimately, [HOSPITAL'S] goal is to help patients make informed decisions about end-of-life care.

Laws/Regulations:

Initiative 1000/Washington Death with Dignity Act:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=70.245>

Washington State Department of Health Regulations Chapter 246-978 WAC:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=246-978>

Reference Materials:

Washington State Department of Health: <https://doh.wa.gov/you-and-your-family/illness-and-disease-z/death-dignity-act>