

# DEATH WITH DIGNITY

## OUR ORGANIZATION

Death with Dignity is a national leader in advocating for and defending aid-in-dying laws since 1993. Our organization supports patient autonomy and the expansion of aid-in-dying laws across the United States.

After authoring the Oregon Death with Dignity Act, we have worked alongside patients and advocates nationwide to pass additional Death with Dignity laws—and protect these laws against attack in the courts to defend patients' rights.

### CONTACT

For information & press inquiries:  
press@deathwithdignity.org

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## WHAT IS DEATH WITH DIGNITY LEGISLATION ?

Death with Dignity—also known as medical aid in dying—is a state-governed end-of-life option that allows a mentally competent, terminally ill adult (with a prognosis of six months or less to live) to request and obtain a prescription for life-ending medication from a licensed health care provider.

Oregon became the first state in the nation to pass a Death with Dignity law in 1994. Since then, fourteen jurisdictions have passed laws on this model, and many states are continuing to fight for Death with Dignity each year. Proven safe, effective, and above all, meaningful, the Oregon Death with Dignity Act works exactly as intended, to give terminally ill patients the freedom to make their own end of life decisions.

## SUPPORT FOR DEATH WITH DIGNITY

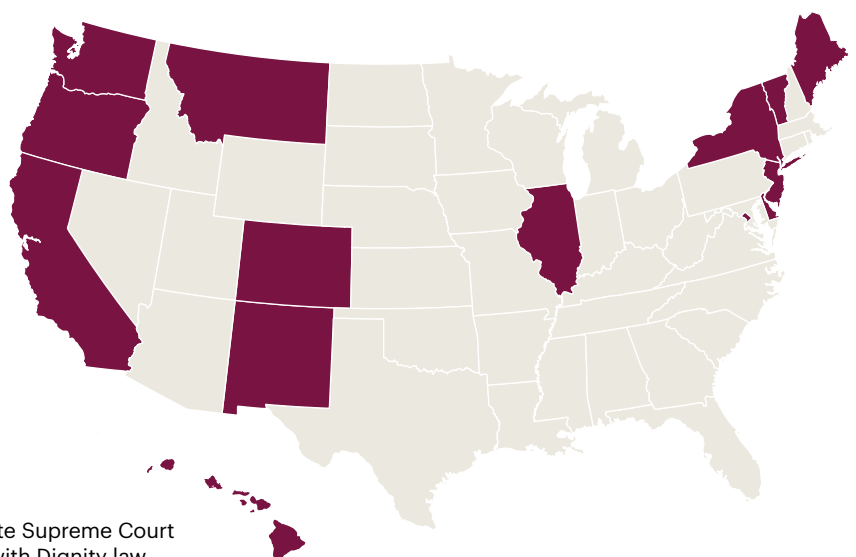
- Death with Dignity is non-partisan, with 70% of Americans supporting it\*
- 6 in 10 Americans find medical-aid-in-dying morally acceptable\*\*
- Death with Dignity is legal in 13 states and the District of Columbia

\*2023 National Library of Medicine  
\*\*2026 Pew Research Center Study

## WHERE IS DEATH WITH DIGNITY LEGAL?

### ● 14 JURISDICTIONS WITH DEATH WITH DIGNITY LAWS

- |            |                 |
|------------|-----------------|
| California | New Jersey      |
| Colorado   | New Mexico      |
| Delaware   | New York        |
| Hawai'i    | Oregon          |
| Illinois   | Vermont         |
| Maine      | Washington      |
| Montana*   | Washington D.C. |



\*In Montana, medical aid in dying is legal by State Supreme Court ruling, but they do not have an existing Death with Dignity law.

# DEATH WITH DIGNITY

## HOW DO DEATH WITH DIGNITY LAWS WORK?

**Death with Dignity is an option designed to give eligible patients greater autonomy and control for their own end-of-life freedom.**

To qualify, an adult patient must be in a jurisdiction with a Death with Dignity law and:

- Be diagnosed with a terminal illness with a prognosis of six months or less to live, confirmed by two licensed health care providers
- Be mentally capable of making and communicating health care decisions
- Be able to self-administer and ingest the medication independently

The process is carried out directly between the patient and their healthcare providers. Patients do not apply through our organization.

**Death with Dignity laws include multiple layers of protection and safeguards to ensure voluntary, informed decision-making:**

- Two licensed health care providers must confirm the patient's terminal condition, prognosis, and capability
- The patient must make multiple requests, including a written request witnessed by two individuals
- Witnesses must affirm the patient is acting voluntarily and without coercion
- The patient may rescind the request at any time
- If capacity is in question, a mental health evaluation is required before proceeding
- Providers must stop the process if coercion is suspected
- States require reporting and oversight through medical and pharmacy boards

## DEATH WITH DIGNITY IS NOT:

**Death with Dignity is NOT Euthanasia, Suicide, or Assisted Suicide.** Death with Dignity laws involve the use of prescribed medication, not lethal injection, to hasten dying for individuals with terminal illness. Patients must self-administer the medication.

**Death with Dignity is NOT an option for patients with Alzheimer's or similar conditions.** Only a licensed health care provider can determine whether a patient qualifies for Death with Dignity, however, patients with Alzheimer's or a similar condition, where they no longer have the ability to make and communicate their own health care decisions, would not qualify, as the laws require that a patient be mentally competent, as well as terminally ill, at the time of request.

**Death with Dignity is NOT an option for all people with terminal illness.** To qualify for Death with Dignity, a patient must meet ALL criteria of the law, without exception. For example, a patient with COVID-19, who may be confirmed terminally ill, would likely no longer be conscious and/or able to self-administer the medication without assistance, deeming them ineligible for this option.

**Death with Dignity is NOT an option that can be requested in an advance directive.** Death with Dignity can only be requested by the patient, meaning that a patient cannot designate Death with Dignity in an advance directive or other legal document, for a proxy to carry out the process on their behalf.