

# District of Columbia Death with Dignity Act

2023 Data Summary



*Death with Dignity Executive Summary*

DC | **HEALTH**

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GOVERNMENT OF THE  
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

The District of Columbia Death with Dignity Act of 2016, DC Law 21-182, was effective on February 18, 2017, and applicable as of June 6, 2017. The Act establishes a process by which competent terminally ill residents of the District of Columbia can legally obtain a physician's prescription for drugs to end their life in a humane and peaceful manner. Terminally ill patients must be District of Columbia residents who have been medically confirmed to have less than six months to live.

### **2023 Statistics**

DC Health is required by law to collect compliance information and issue an annual report. The participation summary is for the period of February 19, 2022, to February 18, 2023. During this period, there were eight (8) prescriptions written for a covered medication<sup>1</sup>, eight (8) qualified patients<sup>2</sup> with written prescribed and dispensed medications. No qualified patients died before ingesting prescribed covered medications. No qualified patients died before the prescribed medication was dispensed by the pharmacy. One (1) physician wrote prescriptions for covered medications.

Below, Table 1 provides an annual statistical report of information that must be collected and reported by DC Health in accordance with D.C. Official Code § 7-661.07(b). Figure 1 shows trends from 2018 to 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined in D.C. Official Code § 7-661.01(5).

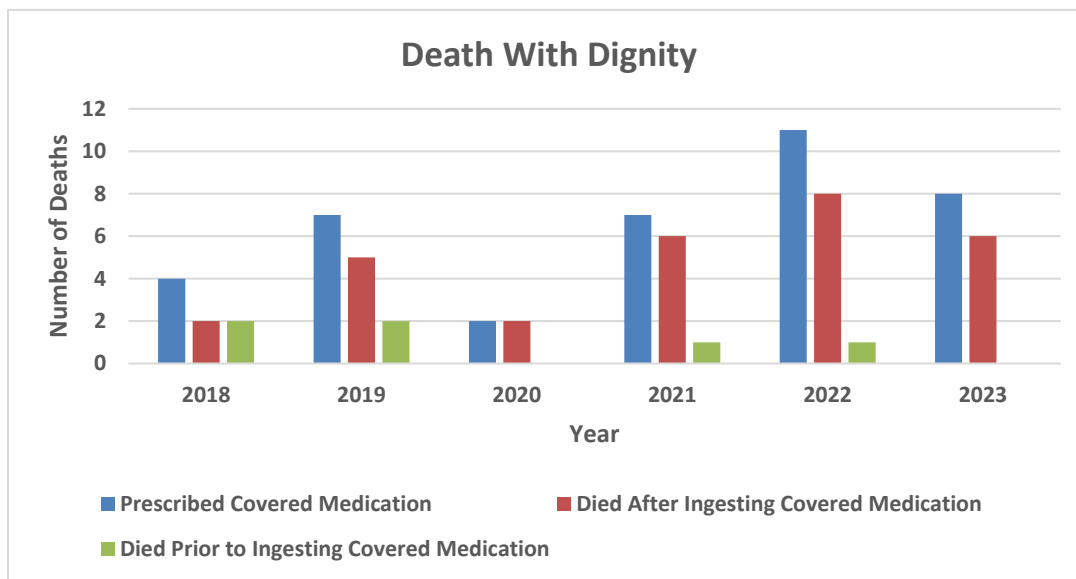
<sup>2</sup> As defined in D.C. Official Code § 7-661.01(15).

Table 1. Demographics of Death with Dignity Participants for Reporting Year 2023						
Number of qualified patients for whom a prescription for a covered medication was written.	Number of known qualified patients who died each year for whom a prescription for a covered medication was written, and the cause of death of those patients.			Number of known deaths in the District from using a covered medication.		Number of physicians who wrote prescriptions for a covered medication.
8	6			6		1
Demographic characteristics for qualified patients who consumed a covered medication and died.						
Age at death	53	53	80	81	39	77
Education level, if known	Master’s Degree	Master’s Degree	Doctorate Degree	Bachelor’s Degree	Master’s Degree	Master’s Degree
Race	White	White	White	White	White	White
Sex	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female
Type of insurance, including whether or not they had insurance, if known	Commercial <sup>3</sup>	Commercial	Government <sup>4</sup>	Government	Commercial	Government
Terminal disease	Cancer	Cancer	Brain Tumor	Cancer	Cancer	Cancer
No qualified patients died before the prescribed medication was dispensed by the pharmacy.						
Cause of Death	N/A					
No qualified patients died after the prescribed medication was dispensed by the pharmacy, but before being ingested by the patient.						
Cause of Death	N/A					

Source: District of Columbia Department of Health, Health System Preparedness Administration

<sup>3</sup> Commercial health insurance, also called private health insurance, is coverage issued by a private company or entity; such health insurance does not include any type of health insurance coverage provided or maintained by a government-run program.  
<sup>4</sup> Government health insurance refers to any insurance program run by U.S. federal, state, or local governments in which people have some or all of their healthcare costs paid for by the government. The two main types of public health insurance are Medicare and Medicaid.

Figure 1. Number of Death with Dignity participants and known deaths, District of Columbia, 2018 to 2023.



Source: District of Columbia Department of Health, Health Systems Preparedness Administration