

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDICAL AID IN DYING

### Medical Aid in Dying Authorized in 6 States

Oregon, 1994 by ballot initiative

Washington, 2008 by ballot initiative

Montana, 2008 by court ruling

(Washington, DC city council passed, and mayor signed in 2016)

Vermont, 2013 through legislation

California, 2015 through legislation

Colorado, 2016 through ballot initiative

### The Evidence from Oregon

Since Oregon's Dignity Law passed in 1997:

- 1,545 received prescription
- 991 took the medication
- 555 didn't (36%)
- Of deaths that occurred in 2015,
  - 90% died in their own homes
  - 92% enrolled in hospice
  - In 95.5% of all cases, families had been notified

Source: Oregon Public Health Division, *Oregon Death with Dignity Act: 2015 Data Summary*, Feb. 4, 2016.

*There has been no attempt to amend, fix, or expand medical aid in dying legislation since adoption of the original Oregon model, in place for over 20 years.*

### Aid in Dying Improves End of Life Care for Everyone

Each year, the Center to Advance Palliative Care releases a "report card" – how states are doing in terms of access to palliative care in America's hospitals. 4 out of 5 of the states where Aid in Dying is authorized received an "A." New York received a B with 78.1 points. We can do better.

Source: Center to Advance Palliative Care, *America's Care of Serious Illness: 2015 State-By-State Report Card on Access to Palliative Care in Our Nation's Hospitals*, available at <https://reportcard.capc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/CAPC-Report>

### Do People Living with Disabilities Oppose Aid in Dying?

People living with disabilities support the notion that individuals should have the right to choose aid in dying by clear majorities, and often in the same percentages as the general voting population. (2014 Purple Poll of voters in MA, NJ, and CT; Harris Poll 2001). There is an increasing level of support among people living with disabilities and the organizations that represent them:

- Disability Rights Legal Center
- Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities supports Utah's End of Life Options Act

### What about People of Faith?

74.8% of New York voters who identify as Catholic support aid in dying, and even among those who attend church weekly or more than once a week, that number was still 61%. Over 2 dozen diverse faith leaders have signed on to a letter in support of the legislation to NY lawmakers, with more joining every week. When Governor Jerry Brown, a Catholic who had trained as a Jesuit priest, signed CA's End of Life Options Act, this is what he said:

"In the end, I was left to reflect on what I would want in the face of my own death. I do not know what I would do if I were dying in prolonged and excruciating pain. I am certain, however, that it would be a comfort to be able to consider the options afforded by this bill. And I wouldn't deny that right to others."

## **A Majority of New Yorkers and Doctors Support Medical Aid in Dying as an Option**

In a 2015 Eagle Point Strategies poll of 1,000 randomly selected New York State voters, 77% said they supported allowing individuals to choose aid in dying; when they learned more about the pending legislation, that number grew to 88%. Support held steady across region, religion, and party affiliation.

Responding to a MedScape survey of 17,000 physicians, doctors responded to the statement: “Patients with an ‘incurable and terminal’ disease should have the option to choose death with dignity, also known as the medical practice of aid in dying” in the following way:

	2010	2014	2016
<b>YES</b>	46%	54%	<b>57%</b>
<b>NO</b>	41%	31%	<b>29%</b>
<b>DEPENDS</b>	14%	15%	<b>14%</b>

## **Increasing Numbers of Professional Associations Support Giving Individuals the Right to Make Their Own End-Of-Life Decisions**

### **Professional associations in support**

American Public Health Association  
American Medical Student Association  
American Medical Women’s Association  
American College of Legal Medicine  
National Association of Social Workers  
Denver and Boulder, CO Medical Associations  
New Mexico Hospice & Palliative Care Association

### **Professional associations taking a neutral position**

American Academy of Hospice & Palliative Medicine  
New York State Academy of Family Physicians  
California Medical Association  
Colorado Medical Association  
American Pharmacists Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Society of Health-System Pharmacists  
Oncology Nursing Society  
Older Women’s League (OWL)  
Hospice & Palliative Care Associations in:  
--California  
--Missouri  
--Vermont

***The AMA decided this summer to re-examine its position on aid in dying.***

### **More and More New York Stakeholders Support Aid in Dying**

Statewide Senior Action Council  
Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester  
Secular Coalition of America-New York Chapter  
Voters for Change-ADK  
MPAC-NY (Mobilizing Preachers & Communities)