



AID-IN-DYING GLOSSARY

advance directive - Encompasses both a living will, which articulates someone's end of life preferences; and a medical durable power of attorney, which appoints an agent to make medical decisions on behalf of someone who is unable to make those decisions herself or himself.

aid in dying - A licensed physician's response to a request from a terminally ill, mentally competent adult for the means to relieve excessive suffering, with death as the foreseeable outcome. Under the generally accepted current code of practice, this would include standard methods of palliation including possible use of terminal palliative sedation. Less commonly, the physician might assist the patient to hasten his or her death through voluntary cessation of eating and drinking. Under the terms of Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, the range of patient options is expanded to include a prescription for a lethal dose of a medication which the patient might elect to self-administer at a time of his or her own choosing. Aid in dying in this framework includes the physician's assistance in the avoidance of complications and induction of the kindest death possible under the circumstances imposed by the patient's disease process. The requirements and safeguards for both patients and physicians, outside of which this form of aid in dying is deemed unacceptable and unlawful, are explicitly described in Oregon's Death with Dignity Act.

End-of-Life Consultation Program - This free service provides counseling to terminally ill clients and their loved ones seeking support in making the choices necessary to prepare for a peaceful death. Offers assistance in completing advance directives, makes referrals to local services, gives guidance on pain and symptom control and provides information on options for a humane, self-determined death.

Death with Dignity Act - Oregon's landmark aid-in-dying law enacted in 1997. Beginning in October 2006, also the value-neutral term used by the Oregon Department of Human Services' (DHS) to describe practice under the law. Example: "...persons who use the Oregon Death with Dignity Act." The same name refers to the Washington law, legalized in 2008.

hospice - An organization offering palliative (comfort) care for the dying when medical treatment is no longer expected to be curative or to prolong life.

palliative care - Also termed "comfort care," this is a comprehensive approach to caring for the terminally ill that emphasizes and brings expertise to relief of discomfort – whether physical, psychological, or spiritual – rather than directing itself to cure an illness or prolongation of life.

palliative/total sedation - Also referred to as terminal sedation. The continuous administration of medication to relieve severe, intractable symptoms that cannot be controlled while keeping the patient conscious. This state is maintained until death occurs.

physician-assisted suicide - An inaccurate and biased term often used to describe a terminally ill, mentally competent person's choice to control the manner and time of death by self-administered life-ending medications prescribed by a physician. Preferred language is aid in dying.

terminal, terminally - Describes an illness for which the medical expectation is death within a few months. Use instead of incurable or mortal.