

## Coloradans Overwhelmingly Supported the End-of-Life Options Act by Ballot Initiative

### How long does the process take to request and obtain the aid-in-dying medication?

The process to request and obtain aid-in-dying medication can be a lengthy one (and may not be successful) if you do not have a supportive healthcare team. The average length of time is between 15 days to three months and requires at least two doctor visits. Therefore, it is very important for individuals who may think they want to access the law to talk to their doctors early.

### What cause of death is listed on the death certificates of individuals who have accessed medical aid in dying?

The underlying illness must be listed as the cause of death. The law specifies that a death resulting from self-administering aid-in-dying medication is not suicide.

### Does accessing medical aid in dying affect a person's will or insurance?

Accessing medical aid in dying does not adversely affect a person's will or insurance. The law specifically mandates that wills, insurance, contracts and annuities are not affected if a qualified individual shortens their dying process by ingesting aid-in-dying medication.



## Contact Us

Compassion & Choices provides assistance to physicians through our **Doc2Doc Program**, which offers free, confidential telephone consultation and information with our medical directors who have extensive aid-in-dying experience. Please give your physician the Doc2Doc phone number: **1.800.247.7421**

For more information, including videos, forms, and other resources please visit: **[CompassionAndChoices.org/Colorado](https://CompassionAndChoices.org/Colorado)**

You can also email us: **[colorado@CompassionAndChoices.org](mailto:colorado@CompassionAndChoices.org)**



# What is the Colorado End-of-Life Options Act?



The **COLORADO END-OF-LIFE OPTIONS ACT** authorizes medical aid in dying. The law allows a mentally capable, terminally ill adult with six months or less to live to request aid-in-dying medication from their doctor which they can choose to self-administer to end unbearable suffering and bring about a peaceful death.



## Who Is Eligible for Medical Aid in Dying?

To be eligible for medical aid in dying under Colorado's law, an individual must be:

- » An adult
- » Terminally ill
- » Given a prognosis of six months or less to live
- » Mentally capable of making their own healthcare decisions

An individual must also be:

- » A resident of Colorado
- » Acting voluntarily
- » Making an informed decision which includes being given information about all other end-of-life options
- » Informed that they may choose not to take aid-in-dying medication, even after they have obtained it
- » Capable of self-administering and ingesting the aid-in-dying medication

### Two Colorado physicians must agree that an individual is eligible to use the COLORADO END-OF-LIFE OPTIONS ACT.

One physician prescribes the medication, and the other physician gives a consulting opinion. If either physician is unable to determine an individual's mental capacity to make the request, a mental health professional (psychiatrist or psychologist) must evaluate the person to determine if the person is capable of making their own healthcare decisions.

## Steps for Using the Colorado Law to Access Medical Aid in Dying

In addition to the requirements listed, each person must follow a clear process to qualify for a prescription for medical aid in dying. It is important to talk to your doctor early.

The eligible individual must make a total of three (3) voluntary requests — two oral requests at least 15 days apart and one written request — to the attending physician.

**NOTE:** *The requests cannot be made by anyone other than the terminally ill person and the request cannot be made via an advance healthcare directive.*

Visit our website at [CompassionAndChoices.org/Colorado](https://CompassionAndChoices.org/Colorado) to learn more about the steps and download the required patient request form.

You can also find the necessary forms on the Colorado State Department of Public Health & Environment website at [Colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/medical-aid-dying](https://Colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/medical-aid-dying).



The **ONLINE FIND CARE TOOL** can help identify a medical facility or hospice that will provide you the care you want at the end of life. If your current medical team is unable or unwilling to provide you with the support you want, use this tool to connect with a facility or hospice that has policies in place to support your end-of-life options.

[CompassionAndChoices.org/Colorado](https://CompassionAndChoices.org/Colorado)

## How to Talk to Your Doctor and Interview a Hospice About Medical Aid in Dying

### Talking with your doctor

Ask your doctor and medical providers now whether they will support your end-of-life decisions, including medical aid in dying. This will encourage your medical providers to listen to your priorities and be prepared to provide you with the treatment you may want in the future. If your medical providers are unable or unwilling to support your end-of-life decisions, you have the option to change your care to a healthcare team that puts your wishes first.

### Suggestions for starting the conversation

#### For those who do not have a terminal illness:

I value quality of life. Should I one day become terminally ill, and if I am considering medical aid in dying as an option, will you give me the information I need and support me in my end-of-life decisions?

#### For those who do have a terminal illness:

Am I eligible for medical aid in dying?

If yes, will you write a prescription in accordance with the Colorado End-of-Life Options Act?

If no, will you refer me to a doctor who is willing to write a prescription? And if I am not eligible now, when should I expect to become eligible?

For tips on how to interview a hospice to ensure that your end-of-life decisions will be supported and for more information on end-of-life options, please visit: [CompassionAndChoices.org/Colorado](https://CompassionAndChoices.org/Colorado).