

Attending Physician Washington Death With Dignity Act Overview

The Attending Physician (AP) is the person who will write the prescription for life-ending medication under the Washington Death With Dignity Act (DWDA). The Consulting Physician (CP) is the person who confirms the patient qualifies for the DWDA.

Prior to writing a prescription for life-ending medication:

1. Patient makes the first oral request to the AP (documented in the medical record), and the 15-day waiting period begins. After the initial evaluation, contacts may be by phone.
2. Patient sees the CP, who faxes the *Consulting Physician's Compliance Form* to the AP.
3. Patient makes the second oral request to the AP (documented in medical record) at the end of the 15-day waiting period.
4. Any time after being seen by both the AP and the CP, the patient submits the *Request for Medication Form* to the AP. A 48-hour waiting period occurs before the prescription (Rx) can be written.

About waiting periods: The AP can accept the *Request for Medication Form* any time after both the AP and CP have seen the patient, including during the 15-day waiting period. The two waiting periods are concurrent.

Optional Psych Referral:

If either the AP or CP question the patient's competence, or feel that a mental illness may be inhibiting a patient's ability to make a rational decision, a psych evaluation can be requested. The psych referral can be made to any Washington State licensed psychiatrist or psychologist. Call Compassion & Choices of Washington (C&C) if you need a recommendation. The person providing the evaluation should fax the completed *Psychiatric Consultant's Compliance Form* to the AP.

For more detailed information, see C&C's "Washington's Death With Dignity Act: A Guide for Physicians."

The AP mails or delivers the Rx to the participating pharmacist. The AP should also phone or fax the participating pharmacist to advise that the Rx is coming. Most pharmacies don't carry this medication and will need to order it. Call Compassion & Choices of Washington (C&C) for help identifying a participating pharmacist. The pharmacist is responsible for completing and mailing the *Pharmacy Dispensing Record Form* to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) after dispensing the medication.

Within 30 days of writing the Rx, the AP must mail the following completed forms to the DOH:

1. The *Attending Physician's Compliance Form*.
2. The *Consulting Physician's Compliance Form*.
3. The *Request for Medication Form (Written Request)*.
4. If a psych evaluation was ordered, the *Psychiatric Consultant's Compliance Form*.

Within 30 days of the patient's death (no matter how the patient dies), the AP must mail the completed *Attending Physician's After Death Reporting Form* to the DOH. If the patient took the medication, you will need data about the death. If the patient is assigned to a C&C volunteer, C&C's Medical Director will provide you with that data. If the patient is not a C&C client, you will need to ask the patient's family or other loved ones who were present at the time of death to gather that data, including time to coma, time to death, and who was present.

Death Certificate: The cause of death is required to be listed as the patient's terminal illness.

All forms are available at www.doh.wa.gov/dwda/forms or by contacting C&C. C&C's Medical Director is available to provide you with support. All contacts are strictly confidential.