

Consulting Physician Washington Death With Dignity Act Overview

The Consulting Physician's (CP) role is to confirm that the patient qualifies for the Washington Death With Dignity Act (DWDA). The Attending Physician (AP) is the person who writes the prescription (Rx) for life-ending medication. **The CP should mail or fax the one-page *Consulting Physician's Compliance Form* to the AP.** If the AP has not yet been identified, the CP should keep the completed form in the medical record until it can be sent to the AP.

Oral Requests

Although they are typically made to the AP, it is permissible for the CP to document the patient's oral requests. If you document an oral request in the patient's medical record, you should notify the AP of the date and/or provide the medical record documentation to the AP.

Optional Psychiatric Referral

If you have any concerns about the patient's capacity to make an informed consent decision about using the DWDA, a psych evaluation must be requested. The psych referral can be made to any Washington State licensed psychiatrist or psychologist. Call Compassion & Choices of Washington (C&C) for help with the referral. You should notify the AP that you have requested a psych evaluation.

Do not:

- Give the completed *Consulting Physician's Compliance Form* to the patient. (Give it to the AP.)
- Send the *Consulting Physician's Compliance Form* to the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). (The AP is required to submit it to the DOH.)
- Accept a psych evaluation form from the psych consultant. (The AP is required to submit it to the DOH.)
- Accept the patient's *Request for Medication* form. (The patient must submit it to the AP.)

Consulting Physicians can:

- Provide the patient with a hospice referral and/or discuss other end-of-life options.
- Refer the patient to an AP, if he or she doesn't have one. For assistance finding an AP, contact C&C.
- Refer patients to C&C, which provides free client support services to educate patients about all their end-of-life options. C&C also assists in locating participating physicians and pharmacists and provides a supportive presence at the time of death, if requested.

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