

Colorado End-of-Life Options Act

PRIOR TO COLORADO END-OF-LIFE OPTIONS ACT

Before Proposition 106 was passed on November 8th, 2016 with a 64.87% approval rating, Colorado law prohibited any individual from aiding another in ending their life and considered the action a crime of felony manslaughter. However, the November 8th election changed this and resulted in the creation of the "Colorado End-of-Life Options Act" (CELOA), giving access to medical aid-in-dying services within the state of Colorado.

With this, Colorado became the 6th state in the union to legalize assisted death. The Colorado law regulations are modeled after Oregon's measures, which was the first state to legalize assisted death in 1994.

WHAT IS MEDICAL AID IN DYING?

Medical aid in dying (or commonly known as "assisted suicide" or euthanasia) is, at a base level, the assistance of another person, especially the taking of lethal drugs provided by a doctor for the purpose by a patient suffering from a terminal illness or incurable condition.* However, actual law outlines much stricter regulations.

COLORADO REGULATIONS

CELOA permits terminally ill patients to self-administer aid-in-dying drugs to voluntarily die. To be eligible, the patient must be:

- At least 18 years old
- A Colorado resident
- Confirmed terminally ill with under six months to live by two licensed physicians
- Determined mentally capable by two licensed physicians
- Evaluated by a licensed mental health professional if not believed to be mentally capable by either of the licensed physicians
- Able to communicate an informed decision
- Informed about other care and treatment responsibilities
- Making a voluntary and informed decision to end their own life

Receiving aid-in-dying drugs requires one written request, witnessed by at least two other persons, and two oral requests, separated by at least 15 days.

ARE DOCTORS REQUIRED TO PERFORM MEDICAL AID-IN-DYING SERVICES?

No; healthcare providers and facilities are not required to prescribe or dispense aid-in-dying medication.

Physicians are not bound by law in any shape or form to perform medical aid-in-dying services. The actual bill specifies that the physicians involved in the process must be *willing* and that the choice of providing these services is left up to each individual physician.

Should an individual physician or entity decide to opt-out of providing these services, their decision should be documented. In this documentation, the level of participation and how many individuals the decision includes must be specified.

LIABILITY

The Colorado End-of-Life Options Act, grants immunity from civil and criminal liability and professional discipline to any person who in good faith assists in providing access to or is present when a patient self-administers the medication.

However, the act establishes criminal penalties for persons who knowingly violate statutes relating to the request for the medication. Coercing a patient with a terminal illness to request the drug is also a crime.

Source: Ballotpedia

[https://ballotpedia.org/Colorado_End_of_Life_Options_Act,_Proposition_106_\(2016\)#cite_note-Guide-5](https://ballotpedia.org/Colorado_End_of_Life_Options_Act,_Proposition_106_(2016)#cite_note-Guide-5)

*As defined by *Oxford Dictionaries*