



THE MAINE DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT

(Effective September 19, 2019)

The Maine Death with Dignity Act allows competent, terminally ill state residents who are within 6 (six) months of death to legally obtain oral prescription medication they can voluntarily take without assistance to peacefully end their life.

To qualify, the patient must be:

- adult, 18 years of age or older;
- legal resident of Maine;
- competent, of sound mind;
- terminally ill;
- within 6 months of death (same standard as hospice); and
- able to self-administer the medication without assistance.

The law contains safeguards that have been shown to protect patients in other states. Over 40 years of combined data show the laws work as intended with no evidence of abuse, undue influence, or coercion.

The safeguards in the Maine Death with Dignity Act include:

- The patient must be competent and voluntarily make two verbal requests and a written request, with a waiting period in between.
- Two witnesses must confirm the patient is acting voluntarily.
- If there is any indication that the patient is not of sound mind, they must be referred to a qualified mental health professional for evaluation.
- Two physicians must confirm the patient meets the requirements of the law.
- No health care professional can be forced to participate, and all medical professionals can opt out with or without reason.
- The patient can rescind their request at any time.
- The patient's life insurance policies are protected.
- Protects the patient's access to all feasible healthcare options.

Forms are available at: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/data-research/vital-records/forms/index.shtml>.