

## HOSPITAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**Title:** The Washington State Death with Dignity Act

**Number:** A722

**Effective Date:** 08/23/10

**Revised Date:** 01-30/18 (minor revisions), 04-22-23, 11-20-23

**Review Date:** 02/24/16

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### PURPOSE

The Board of Directors of Harbor Regional Health (HRH) Community Hospital, acting on the recommendation of the Medical Staff, resolved to allow participation in the Washington State Death with Dignity Act (referred to as "the Act") (RCW 70.745) on February 25, 2009. This policy describes and mandates the implementation of the Act at HRH Community Hospital. Our goal is to assist patients to make informed end-of-life care decisions.

### POLICY

Grounded in the hospital's core values of Respect and Compassion, the hospital recognizes the array of emotional, spiritual, psychological and social reactions that patients and families face when confronted with end-of-life decisions and care planning.

HRH Community Hospital allows Physicians, Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants (Physician/APPs) to participate in the "Washington State Death with Dignity Act" if they so choose. This means that Physicians/APPs at HRH Community Hospital may:

- Perform the duties of an attending Physician/APP;
- Perform the duties of a consulting Physician/APP;
- Prescribe life-ending medication;
- Fill a prescription for life-ending medication;
- Provide counseling in connection with the provision of life-ending medication; and/or
- Perform other duties as provided for and described in the Act

### PROCEDURE

When a HRH Community Hospital Physician/APP participates in any action defined by the Act with a "qualified patient" within this hospital, that Physician/APP must, within an hour of the action, notify the CMO or the on-call administrator of the fact.

It is the Physician's/APP's responsibility to ensure that the correct procedures are followed and that the correct documentation is completed in accordance with the Act and this policy. The steps included in (attachment 1) "The Washington Death with Dignity Checklist" prepared by the Washington State Hospital Association shall be carefully followed and documented.

Executive administrators of the hospital may review medical records of qualified patients, to the extent necessary, to ensure all the safeguards of the Act have been followed and that the required documentation has been completed and submitted to the Washington State Department of Health.

HRH Community Hospital does not mandate that any Physician/APP participate in the Act, nor encourage any Physician/APP to do so.

Physicians/APPs and hospital staff are expected to respond to any patient's questions about life-ending medication with openness and compassion. The Washington State Hospital Association informational brochure is available as a resource to provide to patients and family members (attachment 2). The Palliative Care Consult Team is also available as a referral resource for

physicians/APPs. Social Services are available for staff member referrals. Both resources can provide supportive care that exceeds the Hospital's obligation to openly discuss the patient's concerns, unmet needs, feelings and desires about dying and to explore the meaning behind the patient's questions and help discover options which may not have been considered.

The attending Physician/APP shall encourage any qualified patient to complete a POLST form and ensure that it is placed in the medical record. The attending Physician/APP shall encourage and refer a qualified patient to a Hospice program in order to increase the chance that things will go smoothly at the time of death.

HRHCH Pharmacy formulary does not include the medications customarily prescribed for this purpose and therefore, Physicians/APPs will need to seek an outside source to assist a qualified patient in obtaining the recommended medications.

**Reviewing Bodies:**

Ethics Committee Task Team on I-1000  
Palliative Care Consult Team  
MEC

**Reference Materials:**

RCW 70.745, Washington State Death with Dignity Act  
Washington State Department of Health rules 246-978WAC  
Substitute Senate Bill 5179 (2023)  
Washington State Hospital Association I-1000 Resources  
Oregon State Death with Dignity Act Guidelines  
Board of Directors Resolution, February 25, 2009  
Medical Executive Committee minutes of April 14, 2009

**Attachments:**


Washington State Hospital Association I-1000 Resources  
Washington State Hospital Association Informational Brochure  
Attending Physician's Compliance Form  
Consulting Physician's Compliance Form  
Psychiatric Consultant's Compliance Form  
Attending Physician's after Death Report Form  
Patient's Written Request Form

**Authored By:**


  
Ethics Committee Chair

11-28-23  
Date

**Approved By:**

  
CNO

11-29-2023  
Date

  
CEO

12/1/2023  
Date

### Hospital End of Life Services

In accordance with SB 5179 (Laws of 2023), the purpose of this form is to provide the public with information about which end-of-life services are and are not generally available at each hospital. **Please contact the hospital directly if you have questions.**

Hospital name: Harbor Regional Health Community Hospital

Physical address: 915 Anderson Drive

City: Aberdeen

State: WA

ZIP Code: 98520

Hospital contact: Dori Unterseher

Contact phone #: 360-537-5152

**An acute care hospital may not be the appropriate setting for all end-of-life services listed below.**

Some end-of-life services are most appropriately available through hospice care centers, hospice agency services, or outpatient settings, depending on the specific patient circumstances.

The following checked end-of-life services are generally available at the above listed hospital:

**Advance Care Planning**

- Has written policies & procedures on advance care planning and advance directives.
- Offers information & support for advance care planning including written information on the patient's right to make decisions concerning medical care, the right to accept or refuse medical or surgical treatment, the right to formulate advance directives, & the hospital's policies respecting the implementation of such rights.
- Asks patients about advance care planning and documents whether or not a patient has an advance directive.
- Assists patients with advance care planning.

**End-of-Life and Palliative Care Services**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provides end-of-life education to patients</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provides an evaluation of treatment options</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provides hospice care</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provides palliative care</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provides spiritual care</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provides ethics consultation services to providers and patients</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provides referrals and resources on community resources &amp; education on palliative care.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provides consultation about pain &amp; symptom management.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Process to review and honor Portable Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment forms.</li> </ul> |
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**Washington State Death with Dignity (DWD) Act**

\*Pursuant to the DWD Act, RCW 70.245.190, individual providers and facilities may choose whether or not to participate in the DWD Act. "Participate" means to perform the duties of the attending qualified medical provider, the consulting qualified medical provider, or the counseling function under the DWD Act.

Allows providers to participate in the Death with Dignity Act at the hospital\*

Regardless of whether or not a hospital participates in the DWD Act, the hospital supports providers to:

- Certify that a patient has a terminal disease and provide the patient information about the medical prognosis pursuant to documentation required under the DWD Act.
  - Give information about the DWD Act to a patient upon request, including information about what relevant resources are available and how to access them.
  - Document a patient's first written request for medication that the patient may self-administer to end their life in a humane and dignified manner in the patient's medical record per the DWD Act
  - Refer or transfer care of a patient to another attending or consulting qualified medical provider.
- Provides death with dignity educational materials
  - Hospital pharmacies are permitted to dispense prescriptions in accordance with the purposes of the DWD Act.
  - Permits patients to self-administer DWD medication at the hospital

Comments on next page

Signature: *Dori Unterseher MD PhD CNO*

Signed by: Dori Unterseher, CNO

Date: 12/12/2023

Comments; limitations on services; other services:

None

Signature:

*Dori Unterseher M.D. CNO*

Signed by: **Dori Unterseher, CNO**

Date: **12/12/2023**

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