

Medical Aid in Dying (MAID)

GVR Forum Club

Desert Hills

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Mary Ganapol, Southern AZ Lead for:



With support from two national groups:



What will be covered today:

- End of life options for Arizona residents
- Definition of medical aid in dying (MAID)
- Qualifications and safeguards of the law
- Let's do the numbers ... in Arizona

What are the current end of life options for Arizona residents?

1) Seek all treatments, full speed ahead

2) Discontinue or withdraw treatment

3) Palliative care and hospice



Current options (continued):

- 4) Voluntary stopping eating and drinking
(VSED)
- 5) Palliative sedation (in-patient)

And another option (not in Arizona):

Medical Aid in Dying (MAID)

Preferred terminology

or

Death with Dignity (DwD)

“

“

Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS)

Used by the Opposition

or

Physician Assisted Death (PAD)

“

“

What about euthanasia?

Illegal in all 50 states

Unlikely to be considered in the future

Do **not** use interchangeably with MAID or DwD

Button: “Let me die like a dog.”



What exactly is Medical Aid in Dying?

A medical practice in which a terminally ill, mentally capable adult with a prognosis of six months or less to live has the option to purchase medication prescribed by their doctor to be self-administered to die peacefully if and when they choose.

Medical practice ...



vs.



Terminally ill ...

- 63% cancer
- 14% neurological disorders (ie ALS, Parkinsons)
- 8% cardiovascular disease
- 7% respiratory disease (ie COPD)

Mentally capable adult ...

Rules out people with dementia

Adult = over 18 years of age

(majority are over 65)

Questionable mental capacity?

Triggers a mental health evaluation

6 mos. or less prognosis

90% of those who apply for MAID are enrolled in hospice.



Medication prescribed by their doctor ...

- Combo of various drugs from compound pharmacy
- Formula fine-tuned over the years depending on availability and stats
- American Clinicians Academy for MAID leads the discussion (ACAMAID.org)



To be self-administered ...

- No assistance from others (no coercion)
- This is why it's NOT euthanasia
- Alternatives when you can't swallow?
- How fast do the drugs work?
- Patient can change their mind *at any time* in process

If and when they choose ...

How many people go through all the steps to get the meds, but don't get the prescription filled or take the meds?

So that's the basic definition:

A medical practice in which a terminally ill, mentally capable adult with a prognosis of six months or less to live has the option to purchase medication prescribed by their doctor to be self-administered to die peacefully if and when they choose.

Additional requirements:

Two clinicians confirm patient's qualifications:

- 1) attending provider/prescriber
and
- 2) consulting provider

Must confirm there is **no coercion** or undue influence

Patient must be a **resident** of the state where it's legal **

Additional safeguards:

Oral requests

Written requests

Waiting periods (with or without waivers)

Written statements with witnesses

ALL documented in the medical records.

Other provisions:

Wills, contracts, insurance and annuity policies are not affected by a person choosing medical aid in dying.



And cause of death is shown as the underlying terminal illness (same as other end of life options).

Who can 'opt out'? **Everyone!**

- Doctors, nurses, hospice workers may opt out at any time (sometimes called a 'conscience clause').
- Patients may change their mind at any time.
- All parties are protected from criminal and civil liabilities if the law is followed.

Multiple reasons for choosing MAID ...

Oregon results after 20 years of MAID (1998-2017)

Loss of autonomy	91%
Loss of well being/QOL	89%
Loss of dignity	68%
Loss of bodily control	46%
Burden on the family	43%
Pain	26%
Cost of therapy	3%

It's NOT euthanasia and it's NOT...

ASSISTED SUICIDE or

PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE

Why don't we call it "suicide"?



And American College of Legal Medicine ...

REJECTED THE TERM 'SUICIDE'

- 1) In 1996 when they filed a brief before the U.S. Supreme Court and
- 2) In 2008 when they adopted a formal resolution



Why MAID is not called suicide:

Medical Aid in Dying

- Terminal diagnosis
- Mental capacity
- Patient wants to LIVE
- Planned with family
- Death is 'gentle'
- Normal grieving after loss



Vs. Suicide

- No terminal diagnosis
- Incapable (psychiatric diagnosis)
- Patient wants to DIE
- Impulsive, dies alone
- Death may be violent
- Abnormal grief (family asks "why?")



Law specifies what MAID is *NOT* ...

- Euthanasia
- Mercy killing
- Suicide
- Assisted suicide
- Elder abuse
- Homicide

Misconception: coroners will be inundated when the law passes?

Reality:

Less than 1% that die in states where it's legal use MAID

Many have relief knowing it's available.

Mere existence of MAID improves end-of-life care!

Misconception: hospice can provide comfort care and pain management

Reality:

51% of patients experience pain at end of life
increasing to 60% in last four months.

Many cancer patients have breakthrough pain.

Doctors often underestimate pain levels.

Misconception: Insurance companies deny treatment in states that have MAID

Reality:

They deny coverage for a variety of reasons.

No incentive to deny treatment because in hospice you are no longer pursuing extensive treatment anyway

Medicare covers hospice.

MAID shortens the worst, last part of dying process by days/weeks, not months.

Misconception: Family members coerce terminally-ill loved ones

Reality:

There are plenty of other ways to hasten death with fewer safeguards/liability.

They are far more likely to insist on all measures taken to prolong life.

Caregivers main focus: keep patient alive, regardless of side effects.

Misconception: What about the Hippocratic Oath?

Reality:

Barely half of U.S. medical schools used any form of the Hippocratic Oath (and only 2% used the original)

A 2011 study showed 80% of practicing physicians reported participating in an oath ceremony, but only a quarter felt that the oath significantly affected how they practiced.

What about “first do no harm?”

So where is MAID legal now?

Oregon	1997	Colorado	2017
Washington	2008	Wash. DC	2017
Montana	2009*	Hawaii	2018
Vermont	2013	New Jersey	2019
California	2016	Maine	2019
		New Mexico	2021

The next states to pass a MAID law?

- Nearly 20 states have bills proposed every year
- Many of those states have pro-MAID grassroots organizations
- Two national groups support those efforts:
 - Death With Dignity National Center
 - and
 - Compassion and Choices

Million Geezer March for Human Freedom and Human Dignity



More geezers: 2006 to 2009

Many Arizona counties represented



Polling in Arizona

Behavioral Research Center's Rocky Mountain Poll:

Oct 2015: 56% of Arizonans support MAID legislation

Survey conducted by Arizona Medical Association and
Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association *

Dec 2017: 53% of Arizona physicians support MAID

*ArMA/ AOMA Joint Task Force on End of Life Care

Polling in Arizona ... Jan 2022

- Poll of 855 registered voters in Arizona
- January 11th – 13th, 2022
- On-line opt in survey done monthly
- MoE of +/- 3%



Question ...

Do you support or oppose a proposed law that would allow terminally ill persons to take a medication that would end their own lives as long as two doctors certify that the person is terminally ill and is mentally competent?

The law would also require that the ill person obtain a doctor's prescription for the medication and administer it themselves. In this way the patient would be in total control of their end-of-life decision.

Response categories:

Somewhat support

+ Strongly support

Neutral

Somewhat oppose

+ Strongly oppose

Unsure

Who supports MAID in Arizona?

	SUPPORT somewhat/strongly	OPPOSE somewhat/strongly
TOTAL		
Registered Voters	60%	13%
Male	60%	14%
Female	60%	13%

and a majority of voters in all other demographics – political party, age, religious affiliation, geographics – support passing a MAID law.

Neutral & unsure: Approx. 27%

Full results can be found on our website.

Legislation introduced 2003 to present:

Senate bills for medical aid in dying: 8

House bills for medical aid in dying: 12

Number that advanced out of committee: **ZERO**

Bill called “Arizona Death with Dignity Act” or
“Arizona Medical Aid in Dying Act”

Various names used... 1997 to present

- Arizonans for Death With Dignity
- 5th Freedom Foundation
- End-of-Life Choices Arizona
- Compassion & Choices Arizona
- And now since 2019... Arizona End of Life Options

AZ group formed in 2019 to pass a law:



With support from two national groups:



Interested in this topic?

- Join the efforts at Arizona End of Life Options!
- Website.. AzEndOfLifeOptions.org
- Get the newsletter
- Watch a webinar
- Join an Action Team in your district
- Donate to the cause



Let's thank *Les* for organizing The Forum!



Thank you for inviting me to speak!



Questions? Comments?



Questions? Need a speaker? Contact...

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Arizona End-of-Life Options

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