

AN ACT

D.C. ACT 21-577

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DECEMBER 19, 2016

To provide procedures and requirements regarding the request for and dispensation of covered medications to qualified patients seeking to die in a humane and peaceful manner, to define the duties of attending physicians and consulting physicians, to provide for counseling of patients and family notification, to require informed decision-making and waiting periods, to require reporting from the Department of Health, to outline the effect of the act on contracts, wills, insurance, and annuity policies, to provide for immunities, liabilities, and exceptions, to provide an opt-out provision for health care providers, to provide for claims against a qualified patient's estate for costs incurred by the District government when a qualified patient ingests a covered medication in public, and to establish criminal penalties.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this act may be cited as the "Death with Dignity Act of 2016".

Sec. 2. Definitions.

For the purposes of this act, the term:

(1) "Attending physician" shall have the same meaning as provided in section 2(1) of the Natural Death Act of 1981, effective February 25, 1982 (D.C. Law 4-69; D.C. Official Code § 7-621(1)); provided, that the attending physician's practice shall not be primarily or solely composed of patients requesting a covered medication.

(2) "Capable" means that, in the opinion of a court or the patient's attending physician, consulting physician, psychiatrist, or psychologist, a patient has the ability to make and communicate health care decisions to health care providers.

(3) "Consulting physician" means a physician who is qualified by specialty or experience to make a professional diagnosis and prognosis regarding the patient's disease and who is willing to participate in the provision of a covered medication to a qualified patient in accordance with this act.

(4) "Counseling" means one or more consultations as necessary between a District licensed psychiatrist or psychologist and a patient for the purpose of determining that the patient is capable and not suffering from a psychiatric or psychological disorder or depression causing impaired judgment.