

District of Columbia Death with Dignity Act

2018 Data Summary



Death with Dignity Executive Summary

The District of Columbia Death with Dignity Act of 2016, DC Law 21-182, was effective on February 18, 2017 and applicable as of June 6, 2017. The Act establishes a process by which competent terminally ill residents of the District of Columbia can legally obtain a physician's prescription for drugs to end their life in a humane and peaceful manner. Terminally ill patients must be District of Columbia residents who have been medically confirmed to have less than six months to live.

The Department of Health (DC Health) was engaged in a number of educational activities during the second year the Death with Dignity law was in effect. A *Death with Dignity and Best Practices for the Medical Community* seminar jointly sponsored with Compassion and Choices and DC Health was held for health care professionals on August 10, 2018. The impetus for the presentation was to educate medical providers on the law's requirements and to inform of the process regarding the ACT.

2018 Statistics

The DC Health is required by law to collect compliance information and to issue an annual report. In 2018 there were four prescriptions written for a covered medication, two qualified patients with written prescribed and dispensed medications died. Two qualified patients died before ingesting prescribed covered medications. Three physicians wrote prescriptions for covered medications.

Number of qualified patients for whom a prescription for a covered medication was written.	Number of known qualified patients who died each year for whom a prescription for a covered medication was written, and the cause of death of those patients.	Number of known deaths in the District from using a covered medication.	Number of physicians who wrote prescriptions for a covered medication.
4	4	2	3
Demographic characteristics for qualified patients who consumed a covered medication and died.			
Age at death	81	72	
Education level, if known	Some college, no degree	Master's Degree	
Race	White	White	
Sex	Female	Female	
Type of insurance, including whether or not they had insurance, if known	Federal Employment Insurance	Federal Employment Insurance	
Terminal disease	Lung Cancer	Breast Cancer Metastatic to Lung	
The cause of death for patients whom a prescription for a covered medication was written but died prior to ingesting the covered medication.			
Terminal disease		Merkel Cell Carcinoma	
		Pancreatic Cancer	