

Defiance Klingensmith
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Death with dignity is currently limited to terminally ill adults with six months to live in ten states. I believe this option should be expanded to all adults without the restriction of having to be terminally ill. Keeping the current process of criteria excluding the terminal illness ensures that asking to use this option is not done under distress or in a depressive episode. Pets are able to be humanely relieved of excessive pain, it's not a stretch to afford fellow humans the same courtesy. Valuing peoples' experiences and suffering is valuing life.

Were this option extended to all citizens the current process of being approved should stay intact, without the terminal illness stipulation. The current process involves talking with a primary doctor first to see if the person meets the criteria. If the six month life expectancy criteria were removed, a person would still be required to talk with a primary doctor to explain the motivation to request the medication to end their life, and receive alternative care. This is not where someone would receive the medication. It takes at least a month to go from the first oral request to receiving the lethal dose of medication. After the first physician, a person must go through the same process with a second doctor. After a 15-20 day waiting period a person would orally request to receive the prescription a second time. The person would be required to request the medication on a written document if they still want to proceed. After a written request is received, the physician would be able to write the prescription after 48 hours. Even after the prescription is written, the individual still is not under any obligation to fill it or take it. Every step of this process gives them the opportunity to change their mind, even now one third of the current prescriptions given are not used ("FAQs - Physician-Hastened Death").

Giving people the option to end their life in a humane way preserves their personal autonomy. We as a society, cannot decide what is the tolerable amount of suffering for someone to experience then force them to endure it. We don't do it to animals, we shouldn't do it to people. Each person is able to determine what is morally acceptable for them, regardless of others religious morality standards. If a person wants to humanely end their life because of chronic mental illness, poor quality of life, poverty, reducing carbon footprints that is still valid. There are so many things that literally alter an individual's brain to change how it receives and processes all outside input. Not all things in this life are fixable.

An adult who decides to use the medication under this law, is not showing a disregard for life. This process is well thought out, and gives a person some amount of control over their death. Medical science is so focused on prolonging life at any cost. Society has forgotten not all scenarios are one-size-fits-all, including death. Allowing adults to go through this process could give families a different amount of closure that would not happen the same way in an unexpected or prolonged death. In Oregon, 92 percent of people given the medication choose to die at home. ("FAQs - Physician-Hastened Death") Families would be able to have celebrations of life while the person was alive. An individual who has sought out a doctor willing to assist them with this, will also have made arrangements to pay for after death body care.

Death with dignity is just that, dying with dignity. Instead of waiting for something to happen, causing fear in the unknown this gives the option of a controlled peaceful environment to die. Medical practices emphasize every patient to have informed consent in all procedures, and this is not left out in this process. Every step of the way there is non-bias support, all interpersonal relationships are recognized, all treatment plans are considered, and each human experience valued. Recognizing and acknowledging where people are at, even if you disagree with their values is a basic human decency. Death with dignity is not something that is advertised, pushed, or encouraged in any way and it is not something you can do on whim. Open Death with dignity to all adults who are able to seek it out and consent without terminal illness.

Reference

"FAQs - Physician-Hastened Death." *Death With Dignity*, 2016,
www.deathwithdignity.org/faqs/