

An ethical issue related to nursing is providing care to a patient who requests medical aid in dying. This can cause conflict within the nurse because their role to the patient is to be a caregiver and to help them get healthier from an illness. However, in certain circumstances there is nothing a nurse can do to cure their patient of certain illnesses. Instead, they can only provide the patient with temporary comfort through therapeutic conversations or by administering analgesic medications. This also can cause conflict within the nurse because according to the ANA Code of Ethics the nurse is supposed to promote, advocate for, and protect the rights, health, and safety of the patient. With providing medical aid in dying this would almost seem to go against the code of ethics in advocating for the safety of the patient. However, it does coincide with an additional ANA Code of Ethics statement. That statement being, "The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community or population". Regardless of what others may want for the patient, the patient determines what is to be done regarding their healthcare plan. That is why the nurses' role is to provide the most effective and meaningful care to the patient during this difficult time and to make their last moments as comfortable as possible. As well as to provide the patient with all the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions regarding their healthcare plan. According to the ANA, "An understanding of the ethical issues surrounding medical aid in dying is essential to support patients to make informed end-of-life decisions" (ANA Center for Ethics and Human Rights, 2019). Without the medical aid nurses provide to patients that are dying patients would be left vulnerable and scared with the uncertainties they face. That is why it is so important for nurses to uphold the ANA Code of Ethics and to provide their patients with the treatment they deserve.

Reference:

ANA Center for Ethics and Human Rights. *The Nurse's Role When A Patient Requests Medical Aid in Dying*. American Nurses Association. (2019). <https://www.nursingworld.org/the-nurses-role-when-a-patient-requests-medical-aid-in-dying-web-format.pdf>