

District of Columbia Death with Dignity Act

2019 Data Summary



Death with Dignity Executive Summary

DC | **HEALTH**

WE ARE
WASHINGTON GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

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 third year the Death with Dignity law was in effect. A *Death with Dignity Insights from Physicians and Family Members* seminar jointly sponsored with Compassion and Choices and DC Health was held for health care professionals on October 25, 2019. The presentation provided an opportunity for physicians and family members to discuss their experience as they proceeded through the process.

2019 Statistics

The DC Health is required by law to collect compliance information and to issue an annual report. The participation summary is for the period of February 19, 2018 to February 18, 2019. In 2019 there were seven prescriptions written for a covered medication, seven 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.	
7	7		5	3	
Demographic characteristics for qualified patients who consumed a covered medication and died.					
Age at death	74	73	68	61	86
Education level, if known	Master's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree
Race	White	White	Hispanic	White	White
Sex	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Type of insurance, including whether or not they had insurance, if known	Government	Government	Commercial	Government	Unknown
Terminal disease	Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) aka Lou Gehrig's Disease	Advanced Emphysema	Glioblastoma Multiforme, Isocitrate Dehydrogenase	Ovarian Cancer Metastatic	Lung Cancer
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	Lung Cancer				
	Glioblastoma Multiforme				

Addendum to 2018 Report	
Demographic characteristics for qualified patients who consumed a covered medication and died.	
Age at death	70
Education level, if known	Master's Degree
Race	White
Sex	Female
Type of insurance, including whether or not they had insurance, if known	Commercial
Terminal disease	Ovarian Cancer

*This report was revised in January 2023 to remove identifiable information and conform to the requirements at D.C. Official Code § 7-661.07.