

NZ Assisted Dying Programme

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Assisted dying (AD) became legal in NZ in November 2021, a year on from a binding referendum that the public voted on the End of Life Choice Act, with 63% voting in favour. NZ has joined the likes of Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, Canada, Portugal, Germany, Australia and a multitude of US states in allowing AD.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. be aged 18 years or over
2. be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident
3. suffer from a terminal illness that is likely to end their life within 6 months
4. be in an advanced state of irreversible decline in physical capability
5. be experiencing unbearable suffering that cannot be relieved in a manner that the person considers tolerable
6. be competent to make a decision about assisted dying

The process:

The request must be raised by the patient and be voluntary. The process can be stopped at any time and all other cares continue in parallel to this pathway.

1. Eligibility Assessment
 - a. Attending Medical Practitioner (AMP) assessment
 - i. This practitioner cares for the patient for the entire pathway
 - b. Independent Medical Practitioner (IMP) assessment
 - c. Psychiatrist assessment if either the AMP or IMP believe there is any concern about the person's capacity
2. Planning
 - a. Date selection
 - b. Method selection
 - c. Discussion around what will happen on the day
3. Preparation
 - a. Compliance review by the Registrar to ensure all criteria met, correct paperwork etc
 - b. Prescription is sent to the pharmacy and meds are dispatched to AMP
4. Performance of the assisted death
 - a. Confirmation of consent and capacity
 - b. Complete assisted death
 - i. AMP remains with the patient for the duration
 - c. Completion of the death certificate and other documentation
 - i. 1a is Assisted Death

Oversight:

1. Support for End of Life in NZ (SCENZ) group
 - a. Maintain a list of practitioners providing services
 - b. Provide standards of care
2. The Registrar
 - a. A nominated employee of the MOH
 - b. Must check requirements of the Act have been met before an AD takes place
 - c. Supported by the AD secretariat
3. End of Life Review Committee
 - a. Review AD reports

Who to contact:

- SCENZ 0800 223 852, AssistedDying@health.govt.nz