

New York Physicians Support Medical Aid in Dying

The **New York Medical Aid in Dying Act** would allow mentally capable, terminally ill adults with six months or less to live to have the option to obtain a prescription for medication they can decide to take if their suffering becomes unbearable, so they can die peacefully. No patient or doctor would have to participate in the law. This medical practice is already authorized in seven states and Washington D.C., which totals nearly 20% of the U.S. population.

Medscape, owned by WebMD, provides medical information for clinicians and conducts national physician surveys on a variety of medical issues, including medical aid in dying. This study surveyed 601 physicians across New York State on their views on medical aid in dying.

Support for Medical Aid in Dying

TOTAL SUPPORT: 56%

TOTAL OPPOSITION: 26%

After learning details and provisions of the proposed legislation

TOTAL SUPPORT: 67%

TOTAL OPPOSITION: 19%

When New York physicians learned about how medical aid in dying would be implemented in the bill before the State Legislature, their level of **support jumped 18 points**, from a 30-point margin (56%–26%) in support to a 48-point margin (67%–19%) in support.

Details and provisions:

- Patient must be at least **18 years of age**
- Patient must have **decision-making capacity**
- Patient must have **prognosis of 6 months** or less to live
- **Two physicians** must confirm patient eligibility
- Patient must be able to self-ingest the medication
- **Request must be documented in writing** before 2 witnesses
- **Patients must be informed** about all end-of-life options at the time of request
- Healthcare professionals, including physicians, **may opt out of participation**
- **Liability protection** for physicians who participate in compliance with the law

BY A MARGIN OF

63%–**20%**
SUPPORT OPPOSE

New York State Physicians said they would **like to have the option of medical aid in dying** if they become terminally ill.

New York Physicians Agree:

90% By a margin of 90%–3%, physicians agree that any patient requesting medical aid in dying who is not enrolled in hospice when the request is made should be **offered a referral to hospice**.

77% By a margin of 77%–10%, physicians agree **that a physician who does not practice medical aid in dying should** refer a patient requesting this end-of-life care option to a physician who offers this practice or a reliable resource for information to find a physician who offers this practice.

41% By a margin of 41%–35%, physicians agree **that they would be willing to write a prescription** for a patient who qualifies for the medication.

The full report is available at: <http://www.compassionandchoices.org/nydocsurvey>

New York State & National Medical Groups Support Medical Aid in Dying



Testimony from Physicians

In Support of the Medical Aid in Dying Act



David Pratt, M.D.

Internist, lung specialist, and primary care physician with experience in outpatient palliative care; former Commissioner of Public Health Services in Schenectady County.

“Medical Aid in Dying honors autonomy, gives options, affords dignity and is true to the ethical principle of beneficence ... This is an urgent matter for many New Yorkers ... let’s honor their autonomy and provide them this crucial option.”



Heather Paladine, M.D.

Family Physician; Director of a residency training program in family medicine.

“I ask New York lawmakers not to react to fear based on speculation or misinformation, but to hear the pleas of dying patients and the trusted voices of experienced, dedicated clinicians.”



Robert Milch, M.D.

Co-Founder Hospice Buffalo (1978); Internationally recognized palliative care provider.

“This legislation would allow terminally ill New Yorkers to die without suffering in whatever way is coherent with their own values and beliefs.”