

HB 1319 -- DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT

SPONSOR: Roberts

This bill establishes the "Missouri Death With Dignity Act" which allows a qualified adult to request and obtain a prescription for medication to end his or her life. The request for medication under these provisions must be in a specified form, signed and dated by the patient, and witnessed by at least two individuals as specified in the bill. The patient must be capable, a resident of Missouri, suffering from a terminal disease, and voluntarily request to die.

The attending physician must: ensure that the patient is making an informed decision; refer the patient to a consulting physician for counseling if appropriate; recommend that the patient notify next-of-kin; counsel the patient about the importance of having another person present when the patient takes the medication prescribed and of not taking the medication in a public place; inform the patient that he or she has an opportunity to rescind the request at any time and in any manner and offer the patient an opportunity to rescind at the end of a 15-day waiting period; verify, immediately before writing the prescription for medication that the patient is making an informed decision; fulfill the specified medical record documentation requirements; ensure that all appropriate steps are carried out prior to writing a prescription; and dispense medications directly. The attending physician may sign the patient's death certificate.

Before a patient is qualified to receive a prescription, a consulting physician must examine the patient and his or her relevant medical records and confirm in writing the attending physician's diagnosis that the patient is suffering from a terminal disease and verify that the patient is capable, is acting voluntarily, and has made an informed decision.

If, in the opinion of the attending physician or the consulting physician, a patient may be suffering from a psychiatric or psychological disorder or depression causing impaired judgment, either physician must refer the patient for counseling. No medication to end a patient's life in a humane and dignified manner can be prescribed until the person performing the counseling determines that the patient is not suffering from a psychiatric or psychological disorder or depression causing impaired judgment.

A physician may not write a prescription under these provisions until it has been 15 days after the patient's initial oral request or 48 hours after the patient's written request. The bill specifies the information that must be documented in a patient's

medical record.

The department is required to annually review all records maintained under these provisions and must require any health care provider upon dispensing medication to file a copy of the dispensing record with the department. The information collected is not a public record and must not be made available for inspection by the public. The department must generate and make available to the public an annual statistical report of the information collected.

Any provision in a contract, will, or other agreement, whether written or oral, that would affect whether a person may make or rescind a request for medication to end his or her life in a humane and dignified manner must be invalid. No obligation under any currently existing contract will be conditioned or affected by the making or rescinding of a request by a person for medication to end his or her life in a humane and dignified manner.

The sale, procurement, or issuance of any life, health, or accident insurance or annuity policy or the rate charged for any policy must not be conditioned upon or affected by the making or rescinding of a request by a person for medication to end his or her life. A qualified patient's act of ingesting medication to end his or her life in a humane and dignified manner must not have an effect upon a life, health, or accident insurance or annuity policy.

The bill does not authorize a physician or any other person to end a patient's life by lethal injection, mercy killing, or active euthanasia. Actions taken in accordance with these provisions must not for any purpose constitute suicide, assisted suicide, mercy killing, or homicide under the law.

No person shall be subject to civil or criminal liability or professional disciplinary action for participating in good-faith compliance with the provisions of this bill. However, a health care provider may prohibit another health care provider from participating in the Missouri Death with Dignity Act. Action taken under these provisions must not be the sole basis for a report of unprofessional conduct.

A person who, without authorization of the patient, willfully alters or forges a request for medication or conceals or destroys a rescission of that request with the intent or effect of causing the patient's death is guilty of a class A felony. A person who coerces or exerts undue influence on a patient to request medication to end the patient's life or to destroy a rescission of a request is guilty of a class A felony. Further liability for civil damages resulting from other negligent conduct or intentional

misconduct by any person is not limited by these provisions.

Any governmental entity that incurs costs resulting from a person terminating his or her life in a public place has a claim against the estate of the person to recover the costs and reasonable attorney fees related to enforcing the claim.

Any person who, without authorization, willfully alters, forges, conceals, or destroys an instrument, the reinstatement or revocation of an instrument, or any other evidence or document reflecting the principal's desires and interests with the intent and effect of causing a withholding or withdrawal of life-sustaining procedures or of artificially administered nutrition and hydration which hastens the death of the principal is guilty of a class A felony. Any person who, without authorization of the principal, willfully alters, forges, conceals, or destroys an instrument, the reinstatement or revocation of an instrument, or any other evidence or document reflecting the principal's desires and interests with the intent and effect of affecting a health care decision is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

This bill is similar to HB 1222 (2017) and HB 1919 (2016).