

1 July 2021



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019

Implementation Update

Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Leadership Team - Communique July 2021

Message from the Chair, Dr Scott Blackwell

We have come to the end of a very extraordinary journey as the Implementation Leadership Team (ILT). It has been a privilege for us to work with the Project Team at the Health Department to realise all the elements needed for voluntary assisted dying to commence on 1st July 2021.

We have focussed throughout on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019 (the Act) and the intent of the Parliamentary debate that led to the passing of this legislation.

Consideration of the eligible Western Australians as outlined in the Act has directed our work throughout as it is their suffering approaching the end of their life that voluntary assisted dying will have an impact on.

I thank the many people who have contributed to the work of the ILT over the last 18 months. Our work now comes to a conclusion and voluntary assisted dying will commence on the 1st July as planned.

Please read on to become informed about the many elements that come into place on 1st July and in particular to understand how voluntary assisted dying impacts on your roles and responsibilities in health care.

Dr Scott Blackwell

Chair, Implementation Leadership Team

2021 Implementation Timeline - key dates



Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Care Navigator Service (SWCNS) and Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Pharmacy Service (SWPS)

The SWCNS and the SWPS have now commenced their services. Contact details for these services can be found in the updated information sheets for the [SWCNS](#) and [SWPS](#) and also on the websites for these services (see links [below](#)).

Voluntary Assisted Dying Information Resources

Voluntary assisted dying is now a choice for eligible Western Australians at end of life. A number of information resources are now available for those seeking information about voluntary assisted dying.

WA Department of Health webpage on voluntary assisted dying

An updated webpage for voluntary assisted dying can be accessed [here](#). The webpage includes information resources for voluntary assisted dying (some of which are described below). Other webpages related to voluntary assisted dying include:

- [First Request](#) - Information is provided to assist practitioners to understand their obligations in relation to receiving a First Request for voluntary assisted dying.
 - [Voluntary Assisted Dying Board](#) - Information on the role of the Board, members of the Board and support for accessing the Voluntary Assisted Dying – Information Management System (VAD-IMS).
 - [Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Care Navigator Service \(SWCNS\)](#) - Information on the role of the service, SWCNS resources and contact details for the SWCNS.
 - [Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Pharmacy Service \(SWPS\)](#) - Information on the role of the service, SWPS resources and contact details for the SWPS.
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Updated information sheets

The suite of information sheets available on the [WA Health webpage](#) have been updated to reflect voluntary assisted dying now being a choice at end of life. Resources are available for:

- Community - information for patients, carers and family can be accessed at the [HealthyWA webpage](#).
- Health professionals - information for medical practitioners, nurse practitioners and healthcare workers are available on the [WA Health webpage](#).

Video resources

Recordings from recent presentations for voluntary assisted dying are now available on the webpage. These include:

- Community webinar – A webinar on voluntary assisted dying was held on Wednesday 16th June 2021 and provided an opportunity to hear about the implementation of voluntary assisted dying in Western Australia, learn more about process and how voluntary assisted dying can be accessed from 1 July 2021. A recording of the community webinar presentation delivered by Noreen Fynn and Dr Andrew Miller is now available on the HealthyWA webpage [here](#).
- Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Conference – The conference was held on 22 and 23 May 2021. Recordings of presentations about voluntary assisted dying in Western Australia are now available [here](#).

Mandatory Policy for Health Service Providers

The Managing Voluntary Assisted Dying policy has now come into effect for Health Service Providers (HSPs). The mandatory policy outlines requirements for WA health system entities to appropriately, safely and effectively manage and respond to requests for voluntary assisted dying. HSPs can access the policy [here](#).

Staff at HSPs can access their intranet page for more information on voluntary assisted dying at their service:

- [East Metropolitan Health Service](#)
- [South Metropolitan Health Service](#)
- [North Metropolitan Health Service](#)
- [Western Australian Country Health Service](#)

WA Voluntary Assisted Dying Approved Training released

Practitioners who wish to register to complete the WA VAD Approved Training can apply to the End of Life Care Program in the Department of Health for access. An information sheet on how to register is available on the Voluntary Assisted Dying website [Access to WA VAD Approved Training](#). More information about the WA VAD Approved Training can be found in the [Western Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Guidelines](#).

Support Services

Some people may find issues relating to end-of-life care distressing. If reading the material in this communique or thinking about end-of-life care has raised some issues regarding grief or bereavement or personal crisis, there are helplines and services available to provide support and counselling 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- **Lifeline:** Ring 13 11 14 for telephone support and counselling 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can also visit Lifeline's crisis support chat online, 7pm to midnight, 7 days a week
 - **Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement:** Ring (03) 9265 2100 or 1800 642 066 (free call, Australia-wide) for information about bereavement services and support
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- **Palliative Care WA:** Ring 1800 573 299 (free call, WA) 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week for information and support on advance care planning, palliative care, and grief and loss.



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