

Aid in Dying in California

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Aid in dying laws are surrounded by controversy and emotion, and there are many different reasons people either support or oppose these laws. Whatever your view, California is now one of a handful of states allowing aid in dying. After years of debate in the legislature, Governor Brown signed the End of Life Option Act in October. Under the Act, an adult who suffers from an incurable and irreversible disease that is likely to result in death within 6 months may request a prescription for an aid-in-dying drug for the purpose of ending the adult's life. The adult must be

a resident of California and must have mental capacity to make an informed end-of-life decision and to understand the consequences, risks and alternatives, and the physical capacity to self-administer the drug.

The adult's attending physician as well as an independent consulting physician must confirm the diagnosis of a terminal disease and the adult's capacity to request and administer the drug. The adult must make several requests over a period of time, both verbal and written, for the drug. The adult may also be required to meet with a mental health specialist. The adult must act voluntarily and without undue influence or duress, and the adult must be given multiple opportunities to rescind the request. The request for the drug cannot be made by another on behalf of the adult (under, for example, an Advance Health Care Directive).

The law includes other requirements, safeguards and protections. If the adult follows the law, the death will not be treated as a suicide but shall instead be treated as a natural death from the underlying disease.

Unless extended, this Act will automatically expire on January 1, 2026.

To read more about Victoria Kaempf, click [here](#).