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HOUSE BILL 171

**53RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2017**

INTRODUCED BY

Deborah A. Armstrong and Bill McCamley

AN ACT

RELATING TO HEALTH CARE; ENACTING THE END OF LIFE OPTIONS ACT;  
AMENDING A SECTION OF CHAPTER 30, ARTICLE 2 NMSA 1978 TO  
ESTABLISH RIGHTS, PROCEDURES AND PROTECTIONS RELATING TO  
MEDICAL AID IN DYING; REMOVING CRIMINAL LIABILITY FOR ATTENDING  
HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS WHO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE PURSUANT TO THE  
END OF LIFE OPTIONS ACT.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

**SECTION 1.** [NEW MATERIAL] SHORT TITLE.--Sections 1  
through 9 of this act may be cited as the "End of Life Options  
Act".

**SECTION 2.** [NEW MATERIAL] DEFINITIONS.--As used in the  
End of Life Options Act:

A. "adult" means an individual eighteen years of  
age or older;

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- 1           B. "attending health care provider" means an  
2 individual who:  
3           (1) is licensed:  
4               (a) to practice allopathic medicine  
5 pursuant to the Medical Practice Act;  
6               (b) to practice osteopathic medicine  
7 pursuant to the Osteopathic Medicine Act;  
8               (c) in advanced practice as a nurse  
9 pursuant to the Nursing Practice Act; or  
10            (d) to practice as a physician assistant  
11 pursuant to the Physician Assistant Act or the Osteopathic  
12 Medicine Act;  
13           (2) has responsibility for a patient's health  
14 care; and  
15           (3) provides treatment related to a patient's  
16 terminal illness;

17           C. "capacity" means an individual's ability to  
18 understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of  
19 proposed health care, including its significant benefits, risks  
20 and alternatives to proposed health care and to make and  
21 communicate an informed health care decision. A determination  
22 of lack of capacity shall be made only according to the  
23 provisions of Section 24-7A-11 NMSA 1978;

24           D. "medical aid in dying" means the medical  
25 practice wherein an attending health care provider prescribes

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1 medication to an individual who may self-administer that  
2 medication to bring about the individual's death;

3 E. "self-administer" means taking an affirmative,  
4 voluntary physical action to give oneself a pharmaceutical  
5 substance; and

6 F. "terminal illness" means a disease or condition  
7 that is incurable and irreversible and that, in accordance with  
8 reasonable medical judgment, will result in death within a  
9 reasonably foreseeable period of time.

10 SECTION 3. [NEW MATERIAL] MEDICAL AID IN DYING--ATTENDING  
11 HEALTH CARE PROVIDER DETERMINATION.--An attending health care  
12 provider may provide medical aid in dying to an adult patient  
13 if the attending health care provider:

14 A. determines that the patient:

15 (1) has capacity;

16 (2) has a terminal illness;

17 (3) has made the request for medical aid in  
18 dying voluntarily; and

19 (4) has the ability to self-administer the  
20 medical-aid-in-dying medication;

21 B. treats the patient in accordance with accepted  
22 medical standards of care;

23 C. determines that the patient is making an  
24 informed decision by discussing with the patient:

25 (1) the patient's medical diagnosis and

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1 prognosis;

2 (2) the potential risks associated with taking  
3 the medical-aid-in-dying medication that the patient has  
4 requested the attending health care provider to prescribe;

5 (3) the probable result of taking the medical-  
6 aid-in-dying medication to be prescribed;

7 (4) the patient's option of choosing to obtain  
8 the medical-aid-in-dying medication and not taking it; and

9 (5) the feasible alternatives to medical-aid-  
10 in-dying or additional treatment opportunities, including care  
11 focusing on palliating symptoms and reducing suffering; and

12 D. believes in good faith that the patient's  
13 request does not arise from coercion or undue influence by  
14 another person.

15 SECTION 4. [NEW MATERIAL] DEATH CERTIFICATE--CAUSE OF  
16 DEATH.--The cause of death listed on an individual's death  
17 certificate who is deceased pursuant to self-administration of  
18 medical-aid-in-dying medication pursuant to the End of Life  
19 Options Act shall be the individual's underlying terminal  
20 illness.

21 SECTION 5. [NEW MATERIAL] MEDICAL AID IN DYING--REQUEST--  
22 FORM.--A patient seeking medical aid in dying may make a  
23 request to the patient's attending health care provider for  
24 medical aid in dying using substantially the following form:

25 "REQUEST FOR MEDICATION TO END MY LIFE IN A PEACEFUL MANNER

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1 I, \_\_\_\_\_, am an  
2 adult of sound mind.

3 I am suffering from a terminal illness, which is a disease  
4 or condition that is incurable and irreversible and that,  
5 according to reasonable medical judgment, will result in death  
6 within a reasonably foreseeable period of time. My attending  
7 health care provider has determined that the illness is in its  
8 terminal phase.

9 I have been fully informed of my diagnosis and prognosis,  
10 the nature of the medical-aid-in-dying medication to be  
11 prescribed and potential associated risks, the expected result  
12 and the feasible alternatives or additional treatment  
13 opportunities, including palliating symptoms and reducing  
14 suffering.

15 I request that my attending health care provider prescribe  
16 medication that will end my life in a peaceful manner if I  
17 choose to take it, and I authorize my attending health care  
18 provider to contact a willing pharmacist about my request.

19 I understand that I have the right to rescind this request  
20 at any time.

21 I understand the full import of this request and I expect  
22 to die if I take the medical-aid-in-dying medication  
23 prescribed. I further understand that although most deaths  
24 occur within three hours, my death may take longer. My  
25 attending health care provider has counseled me about this

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1 possibility.

2 I make this request voluntarily and without reservation.

3 I accept full responsibility for my actions.

4 Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

5 Dated: \_\_\_\_\_".

6 SECTION 6. [NEW MATERIAL] MEDICAL AID IN DYING--RIGHT TO  
7 KNOW.--An attending health care provider shall inform  
8 terminally ill patients of all options related to the patients'  
9 care that are legally available to terminally ill patients and  
10 that meet or exceed the medical standards of care for  
11 end-of-life medical care.

12 SECTION 7. [NEW MATERIAL] MEDICAL AID IN DYING--EFFECT ON  
13 WILLS--CONTRACTS.--

14 A. A provision in a contract, will or other  
15 agreement, whether written or oral, to the extent the provision  
16 would affect whether a person may make or rescind a request for  
17 medical-aid-in-dying medication, is not valid.

18 B. An obligation owing under any currently existing  
19 contract may not be conditioned or affected by an individual  
20 making or rescinding a request for medical-aid-in-dying  
21 medication.

22 SECTION 8. [NEW MATERIAL] IMMUNITIES.--

23 A. A person that acts in good faith to comply with  
24 the provisions of Section 3 the End of Life Options Act shall  
25 not be subject to civil or criminal liability or professional

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1 disciplinary action for such action. This immunity extends to  
2 attending health care providers, a patient's caregivers and any  
3 other person that acts to assist the attending health care  
4 provider or patient in the good-faith compliance with the  
5 provisions of Section 3 of the End of Life Options Act at the  
6 request of the attending health care provider or patient.

7 B. A person that declines for any reason to  
8 participate in actions permitted pursuant to Section 3 the End  
9 of Life Options Act shall not be subject to civil or criminal  
10 liability or professional disciplinary action for such action.

11 C. A request by a terminally ill individual for or  
12 provision by an attending health care provider of medication in  
13 good-faith compliance with the provisions of the End of Life  
14 Options Act in accordance with medical standards of care does  
15 not constitute neglect or adult abuse for any purpose of law,  
16 or provide the basis per se for a finding that the requesting  
17 terminally ill individual lacks capacity.

18 D. An attending health care provider may choose  
19 whether to participate in providing medical-aid-in-dying  
20 medication to an individual pursuant to the End of Life Options  
21 Act.

22 E. If an attending health care provider is unable  
23 or unwilling to carry out a patient's request for medical aid  
24 in dying pursuant to the End of Life Options Act and the  
25 patient transfers care to a new attending health care provider,

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1 the patient's prior attending health care provider shall  
2 transfer, upon the patient's request, a copy of the patient's  
3 relevant medical records to the new attending health care  
4 provider.

5 F. No person shall subject any attending health  
6 care provider to discipline, suspension, loss of license, loss  
7 of privilege or other penalty for actions taken in good-faith  
8 reliance on the provisions of the End of Life Options Act or  
9 refusals to act under the End of Life Options Act.

10 SECTION 9. [NEW MATERIAL] SEVERABILITY.--If any part or  
11 application of the End of Life Options Act is held invalid, the  
12 remainder or its application to other situations or persons  
13 shall not be affected.

14 SECTION 10. Section 30-2-4 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1963,  
15 Chapter 303, Section 2-5) is amended to read:

16 "30-2-4. ASSISTING SUICIDE.--

17 A. Assisting suicide consists of deliberately  
18 aiding another in the taking of [his] the person's own life  
19 [Whoever], unless the person aiding another in the taking of  
20 the person's own life is an attending health care provider who  
21 provides medical aid in dying, in accordance with the  
22 provisions of the End of Life Options Act, to an adult patient  
23 who has capacity and who has a terminal illness.

24 B. A person who is not an attending health care  
25 provider providing medical aid in dying in accordance with the

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1 End of Life Options Act and who commits assisting suicide is  
2 guilty of a fourth degree felony.

3 C. As used in this section:

4 (1) "adult" means an individual eighteen years  
5 of age or older;

6 (2) "attending health care provider" means an  
7 individual who:

8 (a) is licensed: 1) to practice  
9 allopathic medicine pursuant to the Medical Practice Act; 2) to  
10 practice osteopathic medicine pursuant to the Osteopathic  
11 Medicine Act; 3) in advanced practice as a nurse pursuant to  
12 the Nursing Practice Act; or 4) to practice as a physician  
13 assistant pursuant to the Physician Assistant Act or the  
14 Osteopathic Medicine Act;

15 (b) has responsibility for a patient's  
16 health care; and

17 (c) provides treatment related to a  
18 patient's terminal illness;

19 (3) "capacity" means an individual's ability  
20 to understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of  
21 proposed health care, including its significant benefits, risks  
22 and alternatives to proposed health care, and to make and  
23 communicate an informed health care decision. A determination  
24 of lack of capacity shall be made only according to the  
25 provisions of Section 24-7A-11 NMSA 1978;

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(4) "medical aid in dying" means the medical practice wherein an attending health care provider prescribes medication to an individual who may self-administer that medication to bring about the individual's death;

(5) "self-administer" means taking an affirmative, voluntary physical action to give oneself a pharmaceutical substance; and

(6) "terminal illness" means a disease or condition that is incurable and irreversible that, in accordance with reasonable medical judgment, will result in death within a reasonably foreseeable period of time."