

## Cause of Death: Death with Dignity

The Death with Dignity Act (DWDA) requires strict confidentiality for all participating patients and physicians. To protect the confidentiality of patients who die under Oregon's Death with Dignity Act (DWDA), physicians should record the underlying terminal disease as the cause of death and mark the manner of death "natural" on their death records/certificates.

### Example1

Cause of Death: (a) Sepsis  
(b) Aspiration Pneumonia  
(c) Dysphasia  
(d) ALS

Manner of Death: Natural

### Example2

Cause of Death: (a) Glioblastoma  
(b)  
(c)  
(d)

Manner of Death: Natural

- Do NOT mention or select suicide for manner of death.\*
- Also avoid using the following words or terms:
  - Physician-assisted suicide or PAS
  - Death with dignity or DWD
  - MAID or medical aid in dying
  - DDMA or DDMP (drug combinations commonly used for DWDA)
  - "Legally prescribed" or "legal prescription"
  - Comfort care
  - ORS 127.800 or OAR 333-009-0030

**Important:** The medical certifier who certifies the death record does not need to be the prescribing physician for the patient.

### Resources for Death with Dignity Act

Visit Oregon's Death with Dignity Act web page at <https://bit.ly/DWDA> for additional information, including any additional paperwork that may need to be submitted for prescribing or attending physicians.

### Contact Us

Center for Health Statistics staff can answer questions about Oregon's Death with Dignity Act

- [General info: DWDA.INFO@oha.oregon.gov](mailto:DWDA.INFO@oha.oregon.gov)

\* DWDA statutory language in [ORS 127.880](#) states, "Actions taken in accordance with ORS 127.800 to 127.897 shall not, for any purpose, constitute suicide, assisted suicide, mercy killing or homicide, under the law."