

18/06/2019

Knowledge is power. Keep your colleagues informed by printing this newsletter to put up on your workplace noticeboard.

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING ACT

We wanted to advise you that the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act (2017) will come into effect today on Wednesday 19th June 2019.

As a union made up of caring and supportive professionals, we know that members' work often concerns reducing people's suffering. While we're aware that this is a sensitive issue and members' views and opinions will be different, however, we want to ensure that when this legislation comes to effect, that you know your rights and responsibilities within your role.

Here's some information that might be relevant to your role at work:

- If you are a Registered Health Practitioner (registered with AHPRA; not a student), you may be called upon by a coordinating doctor to assist in determining whether a person has decision-making capacity, in the instance that the person also has a mental illness
- As a Registered Health Practitioner, you are able to be a Conscientious Objector ; this means you can refuse to provide information, participate in requested assessments, apply for any permits, supply, prescribe, administer or dispense medication or be present during the administration of medication
- Voluntary assisted dying must not be initiated by a Registered Health Practitioner; this includes initiating any discussion or suggest in any way that a person should take this path
- If you are asked to participate in witnessing any declaration in relation to voluntary assisted dying, you may be an ineligible witness if you are directly involved in providing health services or professional care services to the person making the declaration
- There are offences related to misuse of this legislation; if you are unsure about your role, responsibilities and rights in relation to the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act (2017), please contact HACSU Assist on 1300 651 931.

CALL 1300 651 931 **FAX** 03 9650 8122 **EMAIL** hacsu@hacsu.asn.au **MAIL** PO Box 206 Carlton VIC 3053
WEB www.hacsu.asn.au **FAX** 03 9650 8122  facebook.com/hacsu

AUTHORISED BY LLOYD WILLIAMS, STATE SECRETARY

Here's some further information about the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act:

1. **Only people who meet all the conditions and follow the process set out in the law can access the voluntary assisted dying medication. A person's decision to ask for voluntary assisted dying must be:**
 - a. voluntary (the person's own decision); and
 - b. consistent (the person makes three separate requests for voluntary assisted dying during the process); and
 - c. fully informed (the person is well-informed about their disease, and their treatment and palliative care options).
2. **There are certain conditions that must be met by a person prior to accessing the voluntary assisted dying medication, including:**

They must have an advanced disease that will cause their death and that is:

- Likely to cause their death within six months (or within 12 months for neurodegenerative diseases like motor neurone disease) and
- causing the person suffering that is unacceptable to them.

They must have the ability to make and communicate a decision about voluntary assisted dying throughout the formal request process.

They must also:

- be an adult 18 years or over; and
- have been living in Victoria for at least 12 months; and
- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident.

3. **People with a mental illness or disability:**

- Are afforded the same rights as anyone else in the community, however; having a disability or mental illness alone is not sufficient reason to access the medications
- The same conditions apply to people with a disability or mental illness as anyone else in the community.

*If reading this information has raised issues of grief, stress or personal crisis, you may have a GP or other health practitioner who can discuss this with you. You can also talk to Lifeline any time on **13 11 14**.*

If you have any further questions about this or any other issue, you can contact HACSU Assist on 1300 651 931 or assist@hacsu.asn.au