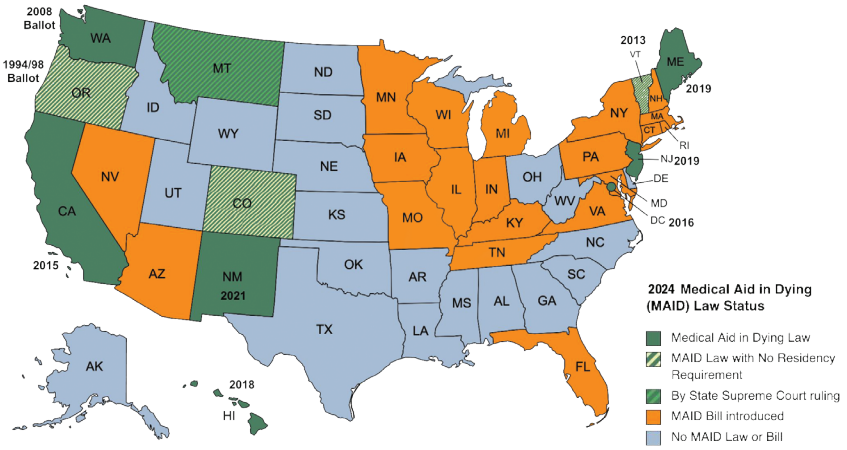
New Hampshire Alliance for End of Life Options

Advocating for Expanded End-of-Life Options for New Hampshire's Terminally Ill Residents

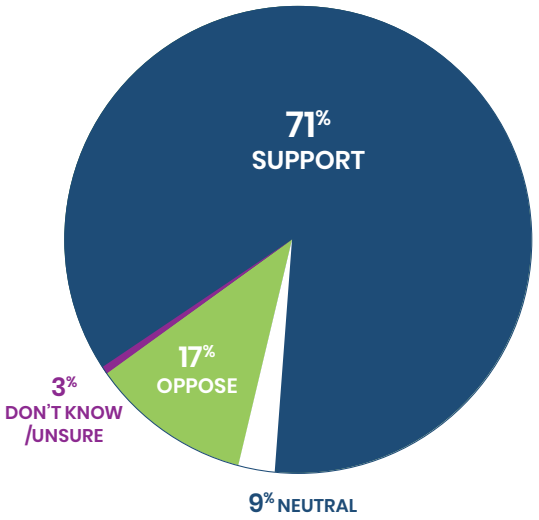
The NH Alliance for End of Life Options *is raising awareness about Medical Aid in Dying—a time tested and widely supported end-of-life option that provides dying people with peace of mind and comfort during their final days. Legislation js required to add the choice of Medical Aid in Dying to NH's existing palliative care and hospice options.*

Through conversation and research, we know New Hampshire is ready for Medical Aid in Dying



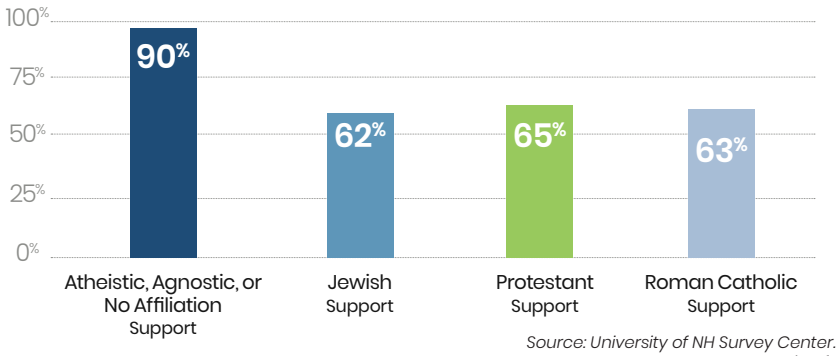
- Ten states and DC allow access to Medical Aid in Dying for the terminally ill
- One in five Americans has access to this option that provides great comfort to the dying
- Oregon and Vermont no longer have residency requirements
- More states are considering legislation

SUPPORT AMONG NH RESIDENTS



Source: University of NH Survey Center conducted this survey (n=1,130) between October 19-23, 2023.

SUPPORT FOR MEDICAL AID IN DYING AMONG NH RELIGIOUS GROUPS



Source: University of NH Survey Center. N=1,130 NH residents; Oct. 19-23, 2023. Margin of error: +/- 2.9 percent.

While hospice often is the best end-of-life care option to relieve the symptoms of terminally ill patients, it doesn't relieve suffering for every dying patient. Medical aid in dying is another patient-driven, end-of-life care option to gently end unbearable suffering when no other option provides relief. ***The process of Medical Aid in Dying has strong and proven safeguards that ensure the option is property and appropriately used.***

- Marianne Jackson, M.D., Madison, NH

© NH End of Life Options 08/2024

The Facts About Medical Aid In Dying for Terminally Ill Granite Staters

Planned legislation will provide the option for terminally ill, mentally capable adults to end their life when and where they choose by requesting a prescription from their doctor. **NH legislation will define a strict, voluntary, multi-step eligibility process.**

Medical Aid in Dying is optional for patients, healthcare providers, and facilities. No person is required to use it and no doctor is mandated to prescribe the medication. **All health care providers and facilities, including hospitals and nursing homes, may opt out of participating**.

In states where Medical Aid in Dying is available, the vast majority of patients who have obtained a prescription were also using hospice care. Medical Aid in Dying does not replace hospice or palliative care; in fact, it complements and improves these end-of-life care options. Having the option often encourages **earlier and deeper conversations between terminally ill people and their loved ones and medical team** and allows for a peaceful death surrounded by loved ones within their own homes, if they desire.

This legislation puts the patient in control. Only the patient can request the prescription, and the patient alone decides if and when to take the medication. The patient must be able to take the medication themselves, and **they are informed by their health care providers that they have the right to change their mind** (even after they have obtained the medication).

There are strict eligibility criteria. The person making the request must:

- be 18 years or older.
- have a terminal condition with a prognosis of six months or less to live.
- be mentally capable of making an informed health care decision.
- be able to take the medication themselves.
- make a written request witnessed by two others.

Two health care providers must agree that the person meets all of these requirements. Having a disability does not qualify one for this.

Medical Aid in Dying laws are active in 10 states and D.C., and **apply only to mentally capable adults with terminal illnesses**.

In 1994, Oregon was the first state to adopt Medical Aid in Dying. Since then, 10 other states and the District of Columbia have adopted Medical Aid in Dying laws, including Vermont in 2013 and Maine in 2019. 26 years of experience across 11 jurisdictions shows these laws help **alleviate suffering while protecting vulnerable people.**

Medical Aid in Dying can provide comfort and control when a person faces the suffering of a terminal illness. **Patients report that just having this option relieves fear and anxiety — even for those who never choose to use it**.

Rebecca Brown
Executive Director
rbrown@nhendoflifeoptions.org
603-728-5557 (phone or text)

Our vision is that New Hampshire is known as a place where people are inspired to live life fully and completely, and enjoy the best quality of life possible, right to the end.

NHEndofLifeOptions.org

New Hampshire Alliance for End of Life Options