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Governor Hochul Signs Medical Aid in Dying Act into New York State Law.

Legislation S.138/A.136 Gives New Yorkers the Choice to Suffer Less – to Shorten Not Their Lives, but Their Deaths.

Governor Hochul Secured Key Additional Guardrails Ensuring Integrity of Patient Decision and Preparedness of Medical Institutions.

Governor Hochul today signed legislation S.138/A.136 that will allow medical aid in dying to be available to terminally ill New Yorkers with less than six months to live. This historic bill signing comes after careful reflection and deliberation with the sponsors of the bill, advocacy organizations, and everyday New Yorkers brave enough to share their personal experiences in order to get this legislation across the finish line.

“Our state will always stand firm in safeguarding New Yorkers' freedoms and right to bodily autonomy, which includes the right for the terminally ill to peacefully and comfortably end their lives with dignity and compassion,” **Governor Hochul said.** “This journey was deeply personal for me. Witnessing my mother's suffering from ALS was an excruciating experience, knowing there was nothing I could do to alleviate the pain of someone I loved. It took years of intimate discussions with our bill sponsors, health experts, advocates, and most importantly, families who have similar firsthand experiences. New Yorkers deserve the choice to endure less suffering, not by shortening their lives, but by shortening their deaths — I firmly believe we made the right decision.”

The bill, as passed by the Legislature originally included a number of protections in order to ensure that no patient was coerced into choosing medical aid in dying and that no health care professional or religiously affiliated health facility would be forced to offer medical aid in dying. The Governor worked with the Legislature to include additional guardrails that will

make sure people won't be taken advantage of, while still ensuring terminally ill New Yorkers have the choice to die comfortably and on their own terms, including:

- A mandatory waiting period of 5 days between when a prescription is written and filled.
- An oral request by the patient for medical aid in dying must be recorded by video or audio.
- A mandatory mental health evaluation of the patient seeking medical aid in dying by a psychologist or psychiatrist.
- A prohibition against anyone who may benefit financially from the death of a patient from being eligible to serve as a witness to the oral request or an interpreter for the patient.
- Limiting the availability of medical aid in dying to New York residents.
- Requiring that the initial evaluation of a patient by a physician be in person.
- Allowing religiously-oriented home hospice providers to opt out of offering medical aid in dying.
- Ensuring that a violation of the law is defined as professional misconduct under the Education Law.
- Extending the effective date of the bill to six months after signing to allow the Department of Health to put into place regulations required to implement the law while also ensuring that health care facilities can properly prepare and train staff for compliance.

In December, the Governor joined the bill's sponsors, supportive advocates and New Yorkers with lived experience at a [press conference announcing the agreement reached with the Legislature](#) to make medical aid in dying available to terminally ill New Yorkers with less than six months to live. The Times Union also published an [op-ed](#) to outline her support for medical aid in dying.

State Senator Gustavo Rivera said, “I’m honored to carry the Medical Aid in Dying Act on behalf of the new Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal. Our state must ensure terminally-ill New Yorkers can choose their journey. I want to thank Assemblymember Paulin and former Senator Hoylman-Sigal for their tireless work to give these New Yorkers the option to make an end-of-life care decision in a dignified and compassionate manner, and to Governor Hochul for signing this bill into law.”

Assemblymember Amy Paulin said, “Today is a historic day for New York. “The Medical Aid in Dying Act gives New Yorkers the dignity they deserve at the most vulnerable moment in their lives. This legislation is about love, autonomy, and easing needless suffering. My sister died a horrific death from ovarian cancer, and in her final days she was in pain so overwhelming that she begged for death. Her experience is, tragically, the story of so many others. Most people will never choose medical aid in dying, but they want the reassurance of having it as a compassionate safeguard that offers comfort even if it is never used. I am profoundly grateful to Governor Hochul for recognizing the deep compassion at the heart of this legislation and to the extraordinary advocates who have spent years working to make this day possible.”

Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal said, “Today’s signing of the Medical Aid in Dying Act marks a historic step forward for compassion, dignity, and personal autonomy in New York State. For terminally ill New Yorkers facing unimaginable pain and suffering, this law ensures they will have the ability to make deeply personal end-of-life decisions on their own terms. This legislation has been years in the making, shaped by the voices of patients, families, physicians, advocates, and faith leaders who courageously shared their experiences. From the beginning, I have said this bill is not about ending life — it is about shortening death and easing suffering. I am deeply grateful to Governor Kathy Hochul for signing this bill into law and for working with the Legislature to strengthen critical safeguards that protect patients, providers, and families while preserving meaningful choice for those with less than six months to live. I also thank Senator Gustavo Rivera for his leadership as Senate sponsor, Assembly sponsor Amy Paulin, Senate Leader Andrea

Stewart-Cousins, and the advocates who helped bring this legislation across the finish line. Most of all, we owe a profound debt of gratitude to the New Yorkers with terminal illnesses and their loved ones who bravely shared their stories to ensure future generations have greater dignity, comfort, and control at the end of life.”

Compassion & Choices Senior Campaign Director Corinne Carey

said, “We are deeply grateful to Governor Hochul for listening to families navigating the realities of terminal illness, to our legislative champions for their steadfast leadership, and to the advocates — many of whom did not live to see this day — whose courage made this moment possible. This law is the result of more than a decade of steady, persistent advocacy by thousands of New Yorkers who shared deeply personal stories and helped move this conversation forward across our state. The Medical Aid in Dying Act affirms a simple but profound principle: that everyone deserves compassion and the freedom to make deeply personal decisions about their own body and their own care at the end of life.”

End of Life Choices New York Executive Director Mandi Zucker

said, “Governor Hochul delivered on her promise to New Yorkers by signing the Medical Aid in Dying Act. End of Life Choices New York was proud to be at the Governor’s announcement in December when she said she would sign the bill, and we were excited then. But today’s milestone is something altogether different – one that we are so proud to have played a small part in seeing to fruition. Yet today’s announcement that the Governor signed the bill is not the end of the fight to implement Medical Aid in Dying for millions of New Yorkers and their families. It is another mile marker in the long and winding road towards fairness, choice, peace, and dignity for all of those watching loved ones struggle with a terminal illness. Over the next six months and beyond, End of Life Choices New York will engage in a massive educational effort for physicians, attorneys, nurses, pharmacists, doulas, and so many other professionals who will be immediately impacted by this new law, as well as the general public. We look forward to working with the Governor’s office and many professional organizations to ensure the law is implemented successfully and efficiently.”