

# Voluntary assisted dying

## Access Standard

This Access Standard is issued by the Health Secretary in accordance with section 174 of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022 (the Act).

### Purpose

This Access Standard sets out how the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) facilitates access to voluntary assisted dying for persons ordinarily resident in NSW, including:

- voluntary assisted dying services provided by medical practitioners and other persons who carry out functions under the Act
- prescribed substances
- information about accessing voluntary assisted dying.

The Access Standard also details how the Ministry facilitates access to voluntary assisted dying to regional residents of NSW.

### Access to services provided by medical practitioners and other persons who carry out functions under the Act

The Ministry facilitates access to voluntary assisted dying services provided by medical practitioners and other persons who carry out functions under the Act by:

- developing, publishing and widely disseminating information and resources about voluntary assisted dying
- developing and maintaining education and training materials associated with voluntary assisted dying, accessible both within and external to NSW Health
- managing the authorisation process to enable eligible medical practitioners and nurse practitioners to provide voluntary assisted dying services

- establishing policies and guidance to implement voluntary assisted dying within NSW Health and to support private practitioners and entities to understand their rights and obligations under the Act
- establishing and supporting the NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Support Services that support voluntary assisted dying activity across NSW and respond to enquiries about voluntary assisted dying from patients, families, clinicians and the wider community. The service comprises three inter-linked operational services:
  - NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service
  - NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Access Service
  - NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Pharmacy Service

The NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service provides assistance to people considering voluntary assisted dying, their family, friends and carers. This service can also support health practitioners and health service providers to navigate the voluntary assisted dying pathway.

The Care Navigator Service:

- provides information and support to patients and other community members with questions about or wishing to seek access to voluntary assisted dying
- supports queries from practitioners and coordinates ongoing training and support for coordinating, consulting and administering practitioners
- can advise patients how to raise voluntary assisted dying with their clinical care team and, in some circumstances, connect them with coordinating, consulting, and administering practitioners.

The NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Access Service comprises a pool of authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners that can act as coordinating, consulting or administering practitioners if services are not available locally, and will support equity of access across NSW, particularly in regional and rural locations.

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## Access to prescribed substances

The Ministry facilitates access to voluntary assisted dying substances for use under the Act through the NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Pharmacy Service.

The Pharmacy Service:

- has a secure supply chain for Schedule 4 and/or Schedule 8 substances approved as voluntary assisted dying substances
- provides specialised pharmaceutical advice in relation to voluntary assisted dying substances
- provides services as an authorised supplier under the Act (including to possess, prepare and supply the voluntary assisted dying substance)
- coordinates the safe procurement, supply and disposal of voluntary assisted dying substances across NSW
- supports patient access to voluntary assisted dying substances.



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## Access to information about accessing voluntary assisted dying

The Ministry facilitates access to information about voluntary assisted dying by:

- developing and publishing information resources about voluntary assisted dying on the NSW Health website, including translated materials and materials developed for Aboriginal communities
- establishing the NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service as a statewide point of contact for information about voluntary assisted dying, including information about how to access voluntary assisted dying
- supporting health practitioners and health services to be ready to receive enquiries for information from people and their families and be able to respond in a patient-centred manner.

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## Access for regional residents

The Ministry facilitates access to voluntary assisted dying for regional residents by:

- establishing the NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator and Pharmacy Service as statewide services, which has capacity to travel to regional areas as required
- establishing the NSW Voluntary Assisted Dying Access Service. The Access Service comprises a pool of authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners that can act as coordinating, consulting or administering practitioners if services are not available locally, and will support equity of access across NSW, particularly in regional and rural locations. The Access Service is in addition to eligible practitioners who can apply to become authorised voluntary assisted dying practitioners as part of their role within the public system or in the community
- making the [NSW Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme \(IPTAAS\)](#) available for patients to attend appointments required as part of the voluntary assisted dying process. IPTAAS is a NSW Government scheme providing financial assistance towards travel and accommodation costs when a patient needs to travel long distances for treatment that is not available locally
- working with local health districts to develop care pathways for regional patients who request access to voluntary assisted dying services
- engaging a broad range of health practitioners and health services across NSW to build understanding and awareness of voluntary assisted dying (including significant regional engagement)
- providing guidance to medical practitioners and health practitioners about the use of telephone/email/audiovisual communication mechanisms in relation to voluntary assisted dying, with a focus on regional practitioners.

The Ministry has a range of voluntary assisted dying resources that provide significant additional detail and guidance regarding the availability of voluntary assisted dying in regional areas. Refer to the [NSW Health voluntary assisted dying website](#) for further information.

