

## California End of Life Option Act

### Information for Our UCLA Patients

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You have been referred to a clinical consultant because you have requested an aid-in-dying drug from your physician or you discussed this issue with another health team member. If you are an adult with a terminal illness, it is your right to make this request, and we at UCLA want to provide the best support and care throughout your illness, whether you receive and use this drug or not.

The California End of Life Option Act, which took effect on June 9, 2016, includes several safeguards and criteria designed to ensure that the law is appropriately used for eligible individuals who request an aid-in-dying drug. At UCLA, we have developed a process that we hope will be helpful to you and your family, as we recognize the significance of these decisions for everyone involved. We have designated a group of specially-trained clinical consultants who serve to further educate you and your family about the specifics of the process. Clinical consultants also provide physicians with guidance on regulatory compliance, should you choose to proceed with an aid-in-dying drug.

### **What makes you eligible to receive an aid-in-dying drug in California?**

You are:

- An adult, 18 years of age or older
- Terminally ill with six months or less to live, as verified by two physicians
- Mentally capable of making your own healthcare decisions
- Able to prove that you are a resident of California
- Acting voluntarily
- Making an informed decision that includes having information about other end-of-life options that may be helpful to you
- Being informed that you may choose to obtain the aid-in-dying drug but not take it
- Capable of administering and ingesting the aid-in-dying drug all by yourself

In order for you to receive the aid-in-dying drug, your attending physician and a consulting physician must examine you and determine that you are an eligible recipient under the California End of Life Option Act. If there are any concerns about your mental capacity, or indications of a mental disorder, you may be referred to a mental health specialist for an evaluation.

## **Who Will Help You With the California End of Life Option Act?**

Once you have made a request for the aid-in-dying drug, your physician or other healthcare provider will refer you to a clinical consultant — a specially-trained psychologist or social worker — for a collaborative consultation. This meeting is intended to educate, inform and assist you with your goals of care. The clinical consultant will help you understand what you need to do to obtain the aid-in-dying drug. The clinical consultant will also ensure that all the appropriate requests, notes and paperwork are signed and filed in your chart prior to drug prescription. Clinical consultants want to make this process as easy as possible for you. If you choose to include your family, the clinical consultant will also assist them. You are invited to bring one or more of your family members, a person you identify as your caregiver, or a close friend to the meeting.

## **What Can You Expect During This Consultation?**

The clinical consultant will:

- Familiarize you with the law and what is required of you and your physicians.
- Discuss your understanding of your current medical condition, review past psychological and social history, and discuss what an aid-in-dying drug means to you.
- Provide you with appropriate referrals to additional resources that might be helpful to you.
- Facilitate a referral to an independent consulting physician, as required by the law.
- Answer your questions or help you to think through your — and your potential loved ones' — thoughts, concerns and feelings as you go through this process.
- Advocate for you when appropriate and develop a plan to ensure that your needs have been met, and that you have made this decision on your own and have not been pressured by others.

This may be your first referral to a clinical social worker/psychologist or you may have had a clinical social worker/psychologist as a routine part of your care throughout your disease process. In either case, this individual, serving as a clinical consultant, will be someone who believes that patients can make decisions for themselves and serve as active participants in their medical care. In addition, the social workers/psychologists on our clinical consultant team are all committed to the principles behind the California End of Life Option Act as their participation is voluntary.

## What Topics Might Be Discussed During the Consultation?

Ideas you could consider discussing or getting help with from your advocate include:

- What brought you to this decision?
- What is meaningful to you in your life right now?
- Under what circumstances would you imagine using this drug?
- Are you lacking resources with regard to assistance at home, management of pain or other symptoms, or psychological support?
- What issues are you currently most troubled by?
- What worries, concerns or fears are you currently facing?
- How will this decision impact those who love/care for you?
- What losses have you been facing as a result of your illness and what kind of help have you received?
- Are there specific tasks and goals that you hope to achieve before your life ends?
- Have you prepared any legacies for those you love? (e.g., letters, videos, notes)
- Are there any communications that you hope to have with friends/family/loved ones? If so, do you need help with these?
- Have you made a financial will or an estate plan? Have you made an ethical will?
- Have you completed a current advance healthcare directive?
- Do you or your family have any concerns of faith, conscience or spirituality that would affect your decision?
- Have you and your physician discussed your goals and values of care?
- What questions do you have or information do you need about this process?

## How Is the Consultation Appointment Arranged?

Your physician should request an appointment with a clinical consultant. If your physician has not made such a request you may call to schedule such an appointment.

- **For patients with cancer:** Call the Simms/Mann - UCLA Center for Integrative Oncology Center at (310) 794-6644. Ask to schedule an appointment with a clinical consultant related to the California End of Life Option Act.
- **For patients with other illnesses:** Call UCLA Care Coordination at (310) 267-9702 and ask to schedule an appointment with a clinical consultant related to the California End of Life Option Act.

## **What or Whom Should I Bring to the Consultation?**

- One or more of your family members, a person you identify as your caregiver, or a close friend, if you choose
- Proof of residency in the form of one of the following if you have it: A driver's license or other identification issued by the state of California; registration to vote in California; evidence that you own or lease property in California; filing of a California tax return for the most recent tax year

## **Is This Consultation Required?**

The consultation with the clinical consultant is not required by law. At UCLA, it is part of our policy to assign a clinical consultant for each patient who makes a request for an aid-in-dying drug and whose physician believes may be an eligible candidate. In order to ensure that you and your physician have the support that you need to move through the process of assessing eligibility and compliance with the law, the appointment with an advocate is required at UCLA.