

# The Washington State Death with Dignity Act<sup>1</sup>

Arline Roller Hinckley, MSW, ACSW

*Do not resent  
growing old.  
Many are denied  
the privilege.*

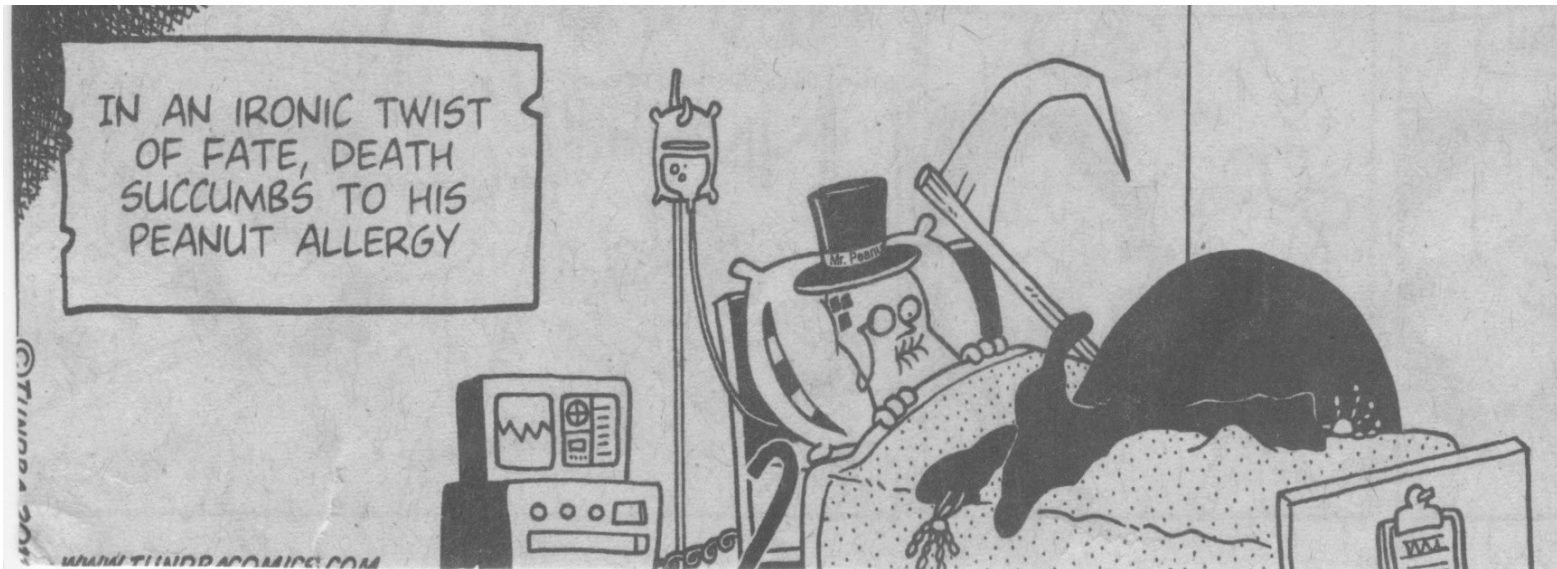
*“With mirth and laughter let old  
wrinkles come”*

*The Merchant of Venice –  
William Shakespeare*

1. Initiative 1000, codified as Chapter 70.245 RCW

# Introduction

- Linkages to UW
- Discuss assisted dying
- Language
- Terminology



# History of Euthanasia and Death with Dignity

- Before Legalization
- First Legalization 1942
- 1995 Oregon Law
- Since then



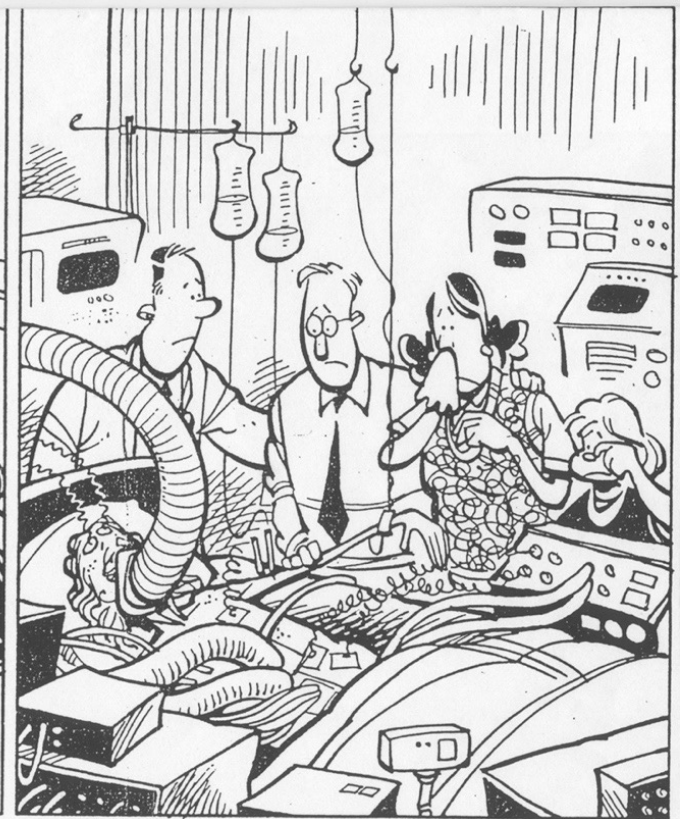
Date	Country	USA: State	MAID	Euthanasia
1942	Switzerland			
1995		Oregon	Initiative	
1997	Columbia			
2001	Netherlands			
2002	Belgium			
2008		Washington	Initiative	
2009	Luxembourg			
		Montana	Court	
2013		Vermont	Legislature	
2015		California	Legislature	
2016	Canada			
		Colorado	Initiative	
		District Col.	Legislature	
2018		Hawai'i	Legislature	
2019		Maine	Legislature	
		New Jersey	Legislature	
2020	Germany			
2021	New Zealand			
		New Mexico	Legislature	
2022	Australia			
		Austria		

# Opposition to Initiative 1000

- Religious concerns
- 'Not Dead Yet'



It would be CRUEL to PROLONG  
the INEVITABLE.



It's INEVITABLE to PROLONG  
the CRUELTY.

# Washington Death with Dignity Act Qualifying

## Eligibility:

- ◆ Must be an adult Washington State resident.
- ◆ Diagnosed by a physician as terminally ill, with disease or condition that will cause death within six months.
- ◆ Capable of making an informed decision, not impaired by mental illness, dementia, or depression.
- ◆ Able to self-administer the prescribed dose of life-ending medication.

## PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING LIFE-ENDING MEDICATION:

1. Ask your primary care physician or specialist if he/she will support your decision to obtain life-ending medication and write the prescription. The physician who writes your prescription is called the "Attending Physician." If he/she declines, ask if he/she would be your Consulting Physician.
2. Make a first oral request for the Death with Dignity Act (DWDA) prescription. Ask your physician, even if he/she has declined to participate in DWDA, to document your first oral request in your medical record.
3. You must have two physicians: an Attending (prescribing) Physician and a Consulting Physician to confirm your diagnosis, prognosis, and mental capacity.
4. After you have seen both the Attending and Consulting Physicians, complete a *Written Request for Medication* form. This form must be signed by two qualified witnesses. One witness can be a family member; one can be an employee of your doctor; or both witnesses can be bystanders. When the form is completed, give it to your Attending Physician.
5. Make a second oral request to the Attending Physician, no sooner than 15 days after the first oral request, and ask your Attending Physician to document your request in the medical record.
6. As long as 48 hours have passed since you provided your *Written Request for Medication* to the Attending Physician, you may obtain the prescribed medication(s) from a pharmacy recommended by End of Life Washington. You or someone you designate may pick up the prescription. You can leave the prescription on file with the pharmacy for up to six months, until you are ready to fill it (check with the pharmacist).

# Obstacles to M.A.I.D.

1. Cost of medications
2. Lack of pharmacies
3. Lack of providers especially in more rural areas of the state.
4. Restrictions in facilities
5. Growth of religiously based health care facilities

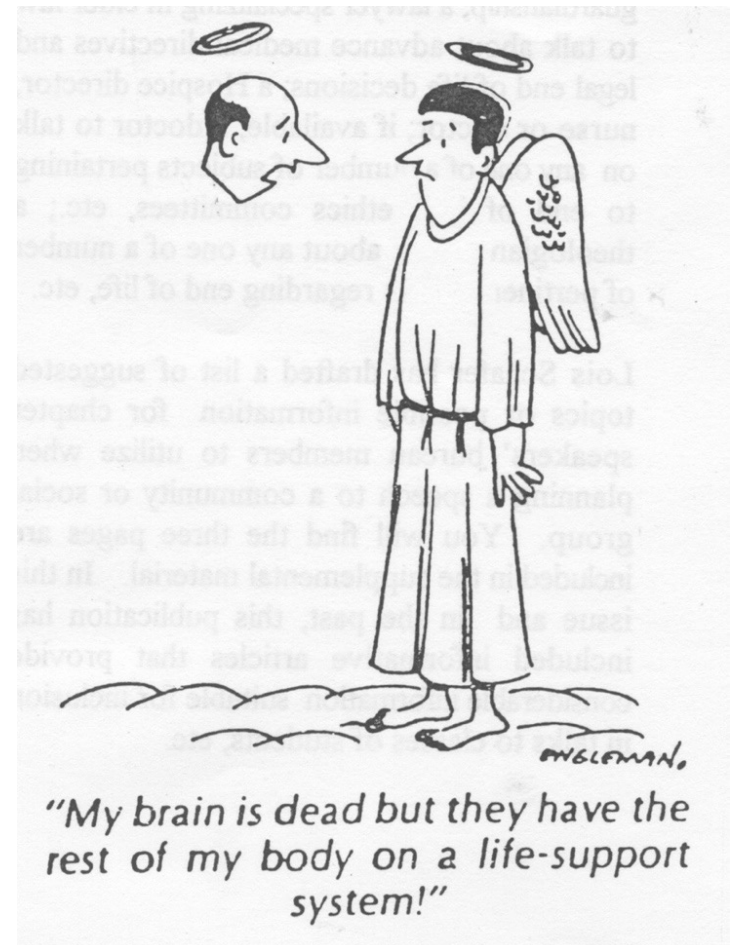


# Provisions of ESHB 1141

1. Increase the availability of MAID by allowing physician assistants and nurse practitioners who provide so much of the medical care in eastern Washington to serve as prescribing or consulting providers.
2. Allow prescriptions to be filed electronically preventing long delays associated with U.S.P.S.
3. Allow medications to be mailed to patients or picked up by courier of an authorized person.
4. Shorten the waiting period for receiving life-ending medications from 15 days to 72 hours. Particularly in eastern WA, clients do not begin the qualification process until their illnesses are very advanced. This delay is often because of the difficulty of finding cooperating providers. Being able to access the medication more quickly will eliminate much suffering.
5. Allow a qualified provider to waive the 15-day waiting period between requests and receiving the medications to 72 hours if death is expected before 72 hours.

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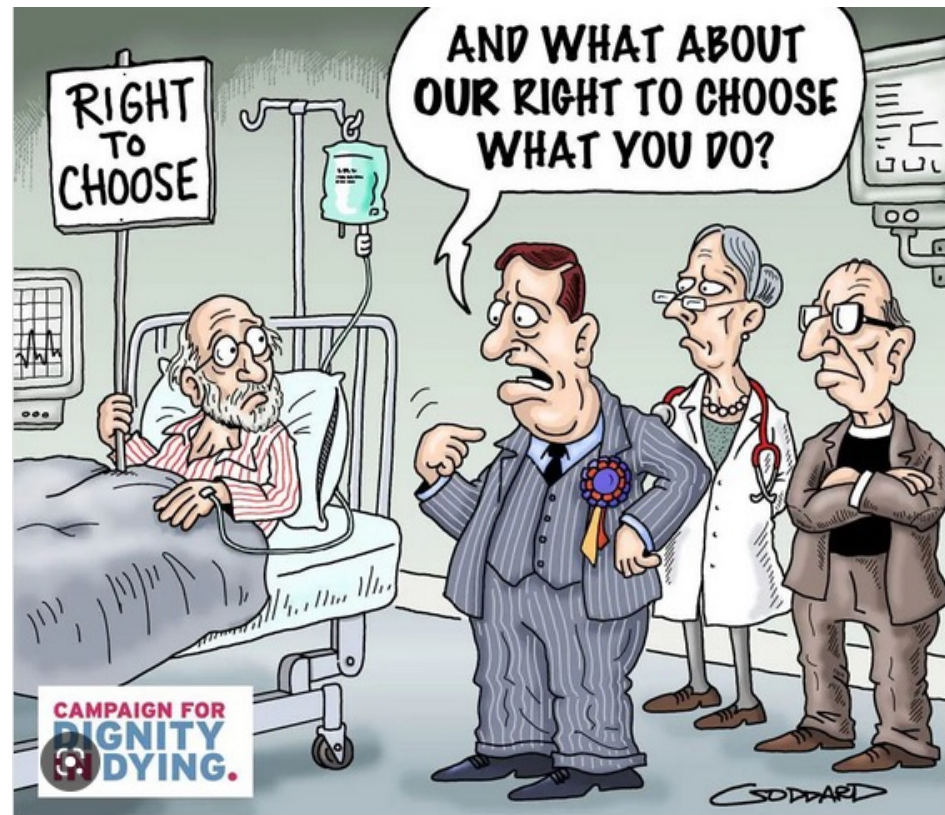
# MAID Statistics

- Annual Reports of the Washington Department of Health
- Report for 2021
  - 400 individuals received medication
    - Prescribed by 186 different MDs or Dos
    - Dispensed by 62 different pharmacies
  - 387 people died
    - 291 died taking the medication (0.45% of all deaths)
    - 44 died without



# End of Life Washington – Mission

- Education
- Stewards of the Law
- Legislative Efforts
  - Combatting legislation that would weaken the Act
  - ESHB 1141
- Client Support



# End-of-Life Options the for the terminally ill

*People considering the option of Death with Dignity (DWD) should also be aware of other end-of-life options.*

- Not starting treatment
- Stopping treatment
- Hospice and palliative (comfort) care
- Voluntary stopping eating and drinking (VSED)
- Palliative sedation

# End of Life Washington – VCAs



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## We can help.

Our volunteers help you explore, plan, and access your end-of-life choices, including Voluntary Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED), the Death with Dignity law, and more.

[Request Support](#)



### DwD For Patients

What patients need to know about Death with Dignity

[Learn more](#)



### DwD For Physicians

Physician resources for Death with Dignity

[Learn more](#)



### Advance Planning

Advance Directive, Dementia Directive, and more

[Learn more](#)



### Stay Informed

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# Role of Volunteer Client Advisors (VCAs)

- Call to EndofLife Washington – a VCA is assigned.
- Goals of the VCA
- Help with Qualification
- Assistance and Support
- The decision to take the medication
  - Supporting
  - The meds
  - The death
- Personal reflections

# Concluding Comments

From a client:

*“If I could choose when to leave, I would choose not to leave.”*

- Go beyond my abbreviated comments
  - View the supplemental information provided as appendices
  - Visit the EOLWA website ([www.endoflifewashington.org](http://www.endoflifewashington.org))
- Discussion of end-life is difficult.
- If you have further questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me;  
[arlinehinckley@yahoo.com](mailto:arlinehinckley@yahoo.com) or 206 795 4217

*“Beautiful young people are accidents of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art.”*

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

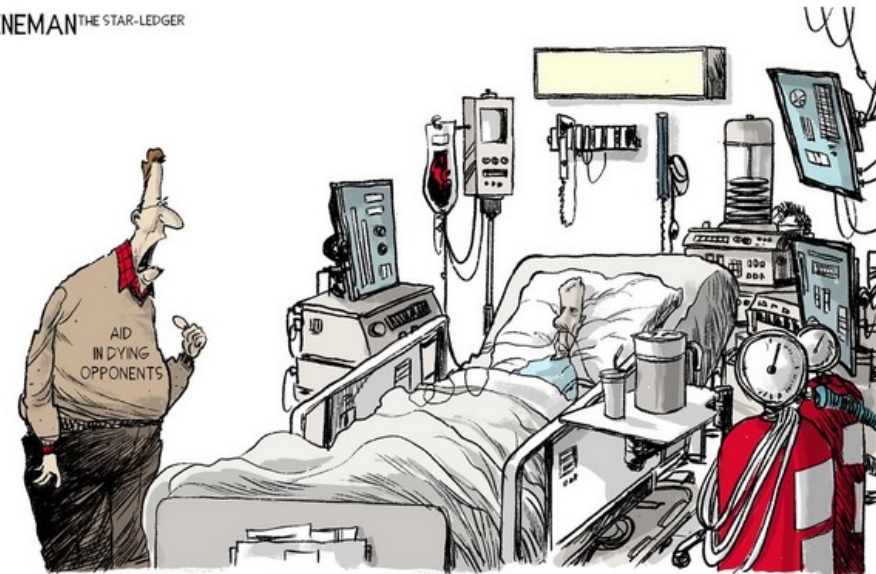




# And 3 more cartoons for you to enjoy



SHENEMAN THE STAR-LEDGER



"HOW SELFISH. HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED HOW YOUR TREMENDOUS PERSONAL SUFFERING AFFECTS ME?"





I'M TERMINALLY ILL,  
WRACKED WITH PAIN, LACK  
CONTROL OF MY BODY, CAN'T  
HOLD DOWN FOOD, AND WANT  
TO CONTROL MY OWN DEATH

THAT MAKES ME  
VERY UNCOMFORTABLE

NO  
ON  
2!

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