Physician-assisted dying legislation around the world

1. Map of international jurisdictions

Canada
Canadian Supreme Court ruled that Canada’s ban on assisted dying violated citizens’ rights in 2015, the Federal Government passed legislation on ‘Medical Aid in Dying’ in 2016, amended in 2021. Doctors are permitted to prescribe drugs for self-administration and to administer.

Montana, USA
Doctors may have a defence to assisting in a person’s suicide under a 2009 Court ruling.

Vermont, USA
Patient Choice and Control at the End of Life Act 2013 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

Maine, USA
Death with Dignity Act 2019 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

Spain

The Netherlands
Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide Act 2001 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration and to administer.

Austria
In January 2022 legislation came into force with eligibility to be assessed by two doctors, prior to self-administration.

Luxembourg
Right to Die with Dignity Act 2009 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration and to administer.

Switzerland
Swiss Criminal Code 1942 permits individuals to assist in another’s suicide as long as the motive for doing so is not ‘selfish’.

Italy
Italy’s Constitutional Court ruled in 2019 that helping someone in “intolerable suffering” commit suicide was not always a crime. In March 2022 MPs voted in favour of legislation that would allow “voluntary medically assisted death” for patients who suffer from an irreversible illness that causes ‘intolerable physical and psychological suffering’.

New Mexico, USA
End of Life Options Act 2016 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

Washington, USA
Death with Dignity Act 2008 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

Washington DC, USA
Death with Dignity Act 2017 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

New Jersey, USA
Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Act 2019 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

Colorado, USA
End of Life Options Act 2016 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

Oregon, USA
Death with Dignity Act 1994 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

California, USA
End of Life Option Act 2015 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

Hawaii, USA
Our Care, Our Choice Act 2019 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration.

New South Wales
The Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration or to administer the drugs if requested by an individual. The Act will come into force in November 2022.

Victoria, Australia
Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration and, in cases where an individual is physically unable to self-administer, to administer the drugs.

Queensland
The Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration, or to administer the drugs if requested by an individual. The Act is in force from 1st January 2023.

South Australia
Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2022 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration or to administer the drugs if requested by an individual. The Act is in force from 30th January 2023.

Western Australia, Australia
Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019 which came into force in July 2021 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration and, in cases where an individual is physically unable to self-administer, to administer the drugs.

South Australia
Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration or to administer the drugs if requested by an individual. The Act came into force in October 2022.

Tasmania, Australia
End-of-life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act 2021 permits doctors to prescribe drugs for self-administration or to administer the drugs if requested by an individual. The Act came into force in October 2022.

For more information on physician-assisted dying go to bma.org.uk/pad
### 2. What does the law look like in some of those places?

This comparative table outlines information about how the law operates in jurisdictions which permit some form of physician-assisted dying. For ease of reference we have selected information about the laws in four jurisdictions where physician-assisted dying has been permitted for the longest time (Switzerland, Oregon USA, The Netherlands and Belgium), the law in Canada, where the law has changed more recently, and the law in New Zealand that comes into force on 7 November 2021.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Since</th>
<th>Supply of lethal drugs for self-administration</th>
<th>Administration of lethal drugs by a third party</th>
<th>Adults only</th>
<th>Terminal illness</th>
<th>Non terminal illness</th>
<th>Psychiatric illness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>☑️ Permitted as long as the motive for doing so is not 'selfish'.</td>
<td>☑️ Final act must be carried out by the individual themselves.</td>
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<td>☑️ Self-administration only</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon USA</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>☑️ Permitted by Death with Dignity Act 1994.</td>
<td>☑️ Permitted by the Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide Act 2001.</td>
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<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>☑️ Permitted by the Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide Act 2001.</td>
<td>☑️ Permitted by Belgium Act on Euthanasia 2002.</td>
<td>☑️ Final act must be carried out by the individual themselves.</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>☑️ Permitted by the Termination of Life on Request and Assisted Suicide Act 2001.</td>
<td>☑️ Permitted by Belgium Act on Euthanasia 2002.</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>☑️ Permitted by Act amending the Canadian Criminal Code. Referred to as a &quot;medical assistance in dying&quot; in Canada.</td>
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<td>☑️ Final act must be carried out by the individual themselves.</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>From 7 November 2021</td>
<td>☑️ Permitted under the End of Life Choice Act 2020.</td>
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<td>☑️ Final act must be carried out by the individual themselves.</td>
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</table>

#### Support and Consultation for End of Life

- **Switzerland**
  - The law does not require the presence of a doctor — but as they are the only persons who can prescribe lethal substances, in practice they are involved in every case.
  - Two doctors (one of whom is the doctor with primary responsibility for the patient's care) have signed an advance request. They must confirm that the patient's condition meets the eligibility criteria.
  - One doctor must have made a voluntary, persistent, and written request to end the patient's life.
  - The law does not allow the presence of a doctor at the time a patient self-administers the drugs.
  - The law allows for the use of lethal drugs in cases of non-terminal illness.

- **Oregon USA**
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