

I am writing in support of LD 613 which would amend the current DWD law to enable doctors to use their clinical judgment and waive the waiting periods (a total of 17 days) for patients that are terminally ill.

Patients should be able to access the medication without worrying they will die during the waiting periods. Drs should have full use of their clinical judgment. Mental capacity can change easily with terminal illness depending on the disease burden. The ability to self-administer the medication can also change quickly with deteriorating health.

Palliative care is often utilized as a consulting practice for the second doctor to approve the eligibility for DWD. It can be difficult to get appointments without a long wait time and in rural areas.

I am speaking for two friends that were able to utilize the DWD law and am so thankful this option was available for both. The decision to pursue DWD was not an easy one that was taken lightly or made rashly. They both fought for years with chemotherapy and radiation treatments to fight the cancer enduring great pain, suffering and anxiety. One had been sick for a long time with chronic illness before he ended up getting cancer. He was very upfront with all his medical providers in advance that he wanted DWD because he did not want to wait to die. He wanted to end his years of suffering as he had no quality of life remaining. I was with him when he had the second consultation with the palliative care doctor to confirm he wanted to get the medication; the burden that he faced for years was lifted when she signed the paperwork. I will never forget seeing his face and the relief he now had knowing he could die on his own terms and that he had the control. Once the medication was picked up he took his time determining his day of death which kept moving up due to his decline in health. He was lucky he was able to chose his date so he could get his affairs in order and spend time with his family and friends. He had full support of hospice for several months before his death and they were a god send.

The waiting periods were a burden and a barrier for my other friend who utilized the DWD option. Unfortunately, his decision to pursue DWD came late in his illness and he did not realize the process was so complicated and lengthy. When he made the decision, he was crushed when he realized he had to wait 17 days before he could take the medication. Every day was an eternity because he was ready to die. When I picked up the medication for him he took it right away there was no hesitation and he died peacefully with friends at his side.

I am glad they both had control over their deaths as for many the alternative is suicide. They were both ready to die and I am glad we live in a state where this is an option. Thank you for considering this amendment and please vote for this to pass.