

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2020

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- LILA MANFIELD SAPINSLEY  
COMPASSIONATE CARE ACT

Introduced By: Senators Miller, Goldin, Coyne, Valverde, and Murray

Date Introduced: February 04, 2020

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 23 of the General Laws entitled "HEALTH AND SAFETY" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 4.14

4 LILA MANFIELD SAPINSLEY COMPASSIONATE CARE ACT

5 **23-4.14-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Lila Manfield Sapinsley  
7 Compassionate Care Act."

8 **23-4.14-2. Definitions.**

9 As used in this chapter, the following words and terms shall have the following  
10 meanings:

11 (1) "Bona fide physician-patient relationship" means a treating or consulting relationship  
12 in the course of which a physician has completed a full assessment of the patient's medical history  
13 and current medical condition.

14 (2) "Capable" means that a patient has the ability to make and communicate health care  
15 decisions to a physician, including communication through persons familiar with the patient's  
16 manner of communicating if those persons are available.

17 (3) "Health care facility" shall have the same meaning as in § 23-17-2.

18 (4) "Health care provider" or "provider" means a person who is licensed, certified,

1 registered or otherwise authorized or permitted by law to administer health care or dispense  
2 medication in the practice of the medical profession.

3 (5) "Impaired judgment" means that a person does not sufficiently understand or  
4 appreciate the relevant facts necessary to make an informed decision.

5 (6) "Interested person" means:

6 (i) The patient's physician;

7 (ii) A person who knows that they are a relative of the patient by blood, civil marriage,  
8 civil union, or adoption;

9 (iii) A person who knows that they would be entitled, upon the patient's death, to any  
10 portion of the estate or assets of the patient under any will or trust, by operation of law, or by  
11 contract.

12 (7) "Medical aid in dying" means a medical practice that allows mentally capable,  
13 terminally ill adults to request a prescription for life-ending medication from their physician,  
14 which the person may self-administer if and when they choose.

15 (8) "Palliative care" shall have the same definition as in § 23-89-3.

16 (9) "Patient" means a person who is eighteen (18) years of age or older, a resident of  
17 Rhode Island, and under the care of a physician

18 (10) "Physician" means an individual licensed to engage in the practice of medicine as  
19 defined in § 5-37-1.

20 (11) "Self-administer" means an individual performing an affirmative conscious,  
21 voluntary act to take into their body medication for medical aid in dying to bring about their own  
22 peaceful death.

23 (12) "Terminal condition" means an incurable and irreversible disease which would,  
24 within reasonable medical judgment, result in death within six (6) months or less.

25 **23-4.14-3. Requirements for prescription and documentation -- Immunity.**

26 (a) A physician shall not be subject to any civil or criminal liability or professional  
27 disciplinary action if the physician prescribes to a patient with a terminal condition medication to  
28 be self-administered for the purpose of bringing about a peaceful death and the physician affirms  
29 by documenting in the patient's medical record that all of the following occurred:

30 (1) The patient made an oral request directly to the physician to be prescribed medication  
31 for the purpose of being self-administered to bring about a peaceful death.

32 (2) No fewer than fifteen (15) days after the first oral request, the patient made a second  
33 oral request to the physician to be prescribed medication to be self-administered for the purpose  
34 of bringing about a peaceful death.

1           (3) At the time of the second oral request, the physician offered the patient an opportunity  
2 to rescind the request.

3           (4) The patient made a written request to be prescribed medication to be self-  
4 administered for the purpose of bringing about a peaceful death that was signed by the patient in  
5 the presence of two (2) subscribing witnesses at least one of whom is not an interested person as  
6 defined in § 23-4.14-2, who were at least eighteen (18) years of age, and who subscribed and  
7 attested that the patient appeared to understand the nature of the document and to be free from  
8 duress or undue influence at the time the request was signed.

9           (5) The physician determined that the patient:

10           (i) Has a terminal condition, after evaluating the patient and their relevant medical  
11 records;

12           (ii) Was capable;

13           (iii) Was making an informed decision;

14           (iv) Had made a voluntary request for medication to bring about a peaceful death; and

15           (v) Was a Rhode Island resident.

16           (6) The physician informed the patient in person, both verbally and in writing, of all the  
17 following:

18           (i) The patient's medical diagnosis;

19           (ii) The patient's prognosis, including an acknowledgement that the physician's prediction  
20 of the patient's life expectancy was an estimate based on the physician's best medical judgment  
21 and was not a guarantee of the actual time remaining in the patient's life, and that the patient  
22 could live longer or shorter than the time predicted;

23           (iii) The range of treatment options available to the patient and the patient's diagnosis;

24           (iv) If the patient was not enrolled or participating in hospice care, all feasible end-of-life  
25 services, including palliative care, comfort care, hospice care, and pain control;

26           (v) The range of possible results, risks, and benefits of each option including potential  
27 risks associated with taking the medication to be prescribed.

28           (7) The physician referred the patient to a second physician for medical confirmation of  
29 the diagnosis, prognosis, and a determination that the patient was capable, was acting voluntarily,  
30 and had made an informed decision.

31           (8) The physician either verified that the patient did not have impaired judgment or  
32 referred the patient for an evaluation by a psychiatrist, psychologist, or clinical social worker,  
33 licensed in Rhode Island, for confirmation that the patient was capable and did not have impaired  
34 judgment.

1           (9) The physician informed the patient that the patient may rescind the request at any  
2 time and in any manner and offered the patient an opportunity to rescind after the patient's second  
3 oral request.

4           (10) The physician ensured that all required steps were carried out in accordance with this  
5 section and confirmed, immediately prior to writing the prescription for medication, that the  
6 patient was making an informed decision.

7           (11) The physician wrote the prescription no fewer than forty-eight (48) hours after the  
8 last to occur of the following events:

9           (i) The patient's written request;

10          (ii) The patient's second oral request; or

11          (iii) The physician's offering the patient an opportunity to rescind the request.

12          (12) The physician either:

13          (i) Dispensed the medication directly, provided that at the time the physician dispensed  
14 the medication, they were licensed to dispense medication in Rhode Island, had a current Drug  
15 Enforcement Administration certificate, and complied with any applicable administrative rules;

16          (ii) With the patient's consent:

17           (A) Contacted a pharmacist and informed the pharmacist of the prescription; and

18           (B) Delivered the written prescription personally, or by mail service or messenger service  
19 (with a signature required on delivery), or electronically to the pharmacist, who dispensed the  
20 medication to the patient, the physician, or an expressly identified agent of the patient.

21          (13) The physician recorded and filed the following in the patient's medical record:

22           (i) The date, time and detailed description of all oral requests of the patient;

23           (ii) All written requests by the patient;

24           (iii) The physician's diagnosis, prognosis, and basis for the determination that the patient  
25 was capable, was acting voluntarily, and had made an informed decision;

26           (iv) The second physician's diagnosis, prognosis, and verification that the patient was  
27 capable, was acting voluntarily, and had made an informed decision;

28           (v) The physician's attestation that the patient was enrolled in hospice care at the time of  
29 the patient's oral and written requests or that the physician informed the patient of all feasible  
30 alternatives, concurrent or additional treatment opportunities, and end-of-life care services; has  
31 determined that the patient did not have impaired judgment;

32           (vi) A report of the outcome and determinations made by the psychiatrist, psychologist,  
33 or clinical social worker during any evaluation which the patient may have received;

34           (vii) The date, time, and detailed description of the physician's offer to the patient to

1 rescind the request for medication at the time of the patient's second oral request; and

2 (ix) A note by the physician indicating that all requirements under this section were  
3 satisfied and describing all of the steps taken to carry out the request, including a notation of the  
4 medication prescribed.

5 (14) After writing the prescription, the physician promptly filed a report with the  
6 department of health documenting completion of all of the requirements under this section.

7 (b) This section shall not be construed to limit civil or criminal liability for gross  
8 negligence, recklessness, or intentional misconduct.

9 **23-4.14-4. No duty to aid.**

10 A patient with a terminal condition who self-administers prescribed medication to bring  
11 about a peaceful death shall not be considered to be a person exposed to grave physical harm  
12 under § 11-56-1, and no person shall be subject to civil or criminal liability solely for being  
13 present when a patient with a terminal condition self-administers medication prescribed pursuant  
14 to this chapter, or for not acting to prevent the patient from self-administering medication  
15 prescribed pursuant to this chapter, or for not rendering aid to a patient who has self-administered  
16 medication pursuant to this chapter.

17 **23-4.14-5. Limitations on actions.**

18 (a) A physician, nurse, pharmacist, or other person shall not be under any duty, by law or  
19 contract, to provide medical aid in dying to an individual in accordance with this chapter.

20 (b) A health care facility or health care provider shall not subject a physician, nurse,  
21 pharmacist, or other person to discipline, suspension, loss of license, loss of privileges, or other  
22 penalty for actions taken in good faith reliance on the provisions of this chapter or refusals to act  
23 under this chapter.

24 (c) Except as otherwise provided in this chapter herein, nothing in this chapter shall be  
25 construed to limit liability for civil damages resulting from negligent conduct or intentional  
26 misconduct by any person.

27 **23-4.14-6. No duty to provide medical aid in dying.**

28 (a) A health care provider may choose whether to provide medical aid in dying to an  
29 individual in accordance with this chapter.

30 (b) If a health care provider is unable or unwilling to carry out an individual's request for  
31 medical aid in dying they must make reasonable efforts to accommodate the individual's request  
32 including, transferring care of the individual to a new health care provider, and the unwilling  
33 health care provider shall coordinate the transfer of the individual's medical records to the new  
34 health care provider.

1           **23-4.14-7. Health care facility exception.**

2           A health care facility may prohibit a physician from writing a prescription for medication  
3 pursuant to this chapter for a patient who intends to self-administer said medication on the  
4 facility's premises, provided the facility has previously notified the physician and patient in  
5 writing of its policy with regard to the said prescriptions. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 23-  
6 4.14-5(b), any physician who violates a policy established by a health care facility under this  
7 section may be subject to sanctions otherwise allowable under law or contract.

8           **23-4.14-8. Insurance policies; Prohibitions.**

9           (a) A person and their beneficiaries shall not be denied benefits under any life insurance  
10 policy, as defined in § 27-4-0.1, for actions taken in accordance with this chapter.

11           (b) The sale, procurement or issuance of a life, health or accident insurance or annuity  
12 policy, or the rate charged for a policy may not be conditioned upon or affected by an individual's  
13 act of making or rescinding a request for medical aid-in-dying medication.

14           (c) A patient's act of self-administering medication prescribed pursuant to this chapter  
15 shall not invalidate any part of a life, health, or accident insurance or annuity policy.

16           (d) It is unlawful for an insurer to deny or alter health care benefits otherwise available to  
17 an individual with a terminal condition based on the availability of aid in dying or otherwise  
18 attempt to coerce a patient with a terminal condition to make a request for medication pursuant to  
19 this chapter.

20           (e) The sale, procurement, or issue of any medical malpractice insurance policy or the  
21 rate charged for the policy shall not be conditioned upon or affected by whether the physician is  
22 willing or unwilling to participate in the provisions of this chapter.

23           **23-4.14-9. No effect on palliative sedation.**

24           This chapter shall not limit or otherwise affect the provision, administration, or receipt of  
25 palliative sedation consistent with accepted medical standards.

26           **23-4.14-10. Protection of patient choice at end-of-life.**

27           A physician with a bona fide physician-patient relationship with a patient with a terminal  
28 condition shall not be considered to have engaged in unprofessional conduct under § 5-37-5.1 if:

29           (1) The physician determines that the patient is capable and does not have impaired  
30 judgment; and

31           (2) The physician informs the patient of all feasible end-of-life services, including  
32 palliative care, comfort care, hospice care, and pain control; and

33           (3) The physician prescribes a dose of medication intended to bring about a peaceful  
34 death to the patient.

1           **23-4.14-11. Immunity for physicians.**

2           (a) A health care provider or health care facility shall be immune from any civil or  
3 criminal liability or professional disciplinary action for actions performed in good faith  
4 compliance with the provisions of this chapter.

5           (b) A request by an individual for or provision by a physician of medical aid-in-dying  
6 medication with this chapter does not solely constitute neglect or elder abuse for any purpose of  
7 law, or provide the sole basis for the appointment of a guardian or conservator.

8           (c) A person is not subject to civil or criminal liability when, in compliance with this  
9 chapter for being present when a qualified individual self-administers the prescribed medical aid-  
10 in-dying medication.

11           (d) This section does not limit civil or criminal liability for negligence, recklessness or  
12 intentional misconduct.

13           **23-4.14-12. Safe disposal of unused medications.**

14           A person who has custody or control of medical aid-in-dying medication dispensed under  
15 this chapter that remains unused after the terminally ill individual's death will dispose of the  
16 unused medical aid-in-dying medication by lawful means in accordance with state and federal  
17 guidelines including:

18           (1) Returning the unused medical aid-in-dying medication to the prescribing physician  
19 who shall dispose of the medication by lawful means; or

20           (2) Returning the unused medical aid-in-dying medication to a federally approved  
21 medication take-back program.

22           **23-4.14-13. Death certificate.**

23           (a) Unless otherwise prohibited by law, the physician or the hospice medical director  
24 shall sign the death certificate of a qualified individual who obtained and self-administered  
25 medical aid-in-dying medication.

26           (b) When a death has occurred in accordance with this chapter, the manner of death shall  
27 not be listed as suicide or homicide.

28           (c) When a death has occurred in accordance with this chapter, the cause of death shall be  
29 listed as the underlying terminal illness.

30           (d) When a death has occurred in accordance with this chapter, this alone does not  
31 constitute grounds for a post-mortem inquiry, as described in § 23-4-4.

32           **23-4.14-14. Statutory construction.**

33           Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to authorize a physician or any other person to  
34 end a patient's life by lethal injection, mercy killing, or active euthanasia. Action taken in

1 [accordance with this chapter shall not be construed for any purpose to constitute suicide, assisted](#)  
2 [suicide, mercy killing, or homicide under the law. This section shall not be construed to conflict](#)  
3 [with section 1553 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, Pub. L. No. 111-148, as](#)  
4 [amended by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-152.](#)

5 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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LC003851  
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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO HEALTH AND SAFETY -- LILA MANFIELD SAPINSLEY  
COMPASSIONATE CARE ACT

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- 1           This act would establish detailed steps and safeguards to create the Lila Manfield
- 2   Sapinsley Compassionate Care Act, to provide a legal mechanism whereby a terminally ill patient
- 3   may choose to end their life using drugs prescribed by a physician.
- 4           This act would take effect upon passage.

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