

Attn: Governor Lombardo and the Senate Committee on Government Affairs
From: Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

RE: SB 239

Medical aid in dying is sometimes incorrectly referred to as "assisted physician suicide," "physician aid in dying," "death with dignity," and "euthanasia." Medical aid in dying is not assisted suicide, suicide, or euthanasia. These terms are misleading and factually incorrect.

Medical aid in dying protects patients, affords dying people autonomy and compassion during the most difficult time, improves end-of-life care, and would cost our state almost nothing to implement, except for the minimal costs associated with collecting data and producing the annual statistical reports.

The Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) supports the individual's right to make informed choices on decisions that will impact their life, this includes their rights to make end of life informed choices. Informed choice occurs when a person, with or without reasonable accommodations, understands all the options available to them, including the benefits and risks of their decisions. The process of informed choice doesn't have an end and doesn't just occur onetime. Informed choice is part of an ongoing process of engaging people in person-centered conversations about their goals and decisions that will impact their life. An informed choice allows an individual with disabilities to be in control of their life's decisions and ensure they're making meaningful choices about what will impact their future.

The Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) believes that all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities should be provided with all options that impact their life and if possible, should be provided the opportunity to experience and/or explore their options before making a decision.

Policy Recommendations:

- Information shall be given to the individual making an informed decision in the manner most appropriate to their communication needs and that is understandable to the individual.
- Individuals, families, caregivers, and guardians shall be engaged regularly in conversations about their goals and aspirations and to include supported decision-making discussions.
- Encouraging individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to enact supported decision making in all aspects of their life, including their end-of-life care.
- Information on all available options shall be provided in a way that is easily understood and will include benefits, risks, and steps to move forward, if desired.
- Informed choice process shall include an opportunity to visit and observe all options available, which may include people with lived experience and to talk with them about their experiences.
- Ensure that choices are respected, and individuals will not be forced to do something that they don't want to do.
- NGCDD also believes that agencies should ensure informed choice through written policies and procedures, standardized assessments, provider competencies, training and technical assistance, and ongoing monitoring.