

States Abandon Initial “Safeguards” to Expand Assisted Suicide Laws

Ten U.S. states allow assisted suicide. When states first legalize the practice, the initial laws include several so-called safeguards. These limits typically include a required waiting period between when the patient requests the lethal drugs and receives the prescription, a residency requirement to limit the practice to people living in the state, and a requirement that only doctors can write the prescription for lethal drugs.

However, many states have since removed those provisions, persuaded by assisted suicide proponents who argue that these limits, once heralded as safeguards, are now barriers to access. Those same proponents continue to propose new expansions of assisted suicide where it is legal, including extending eligibility to people *who are not dying*.

The expansion of assisted suicide to people who are not terminally ill, however, has not been bound to changes in law. In fact, this is already happening in states under existing assisted suicide laws:

- In Oregon, the government reported that patients who died from lethal assisted suicide drugs include those who had **diabetes, anorexia, arthritis, arteritis, blood disease, complications from a fall, hernia, kidney failure, medical care complications, musculoskeletal system disorders, sclerosis, and stenosis.**⁹
- In Colorado, **two women with anorexia in their early 30s were given assisted suicide drugs to end their lives**, an expansion not authorized by Colorado law, according to a published medical journal.¹⁰



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1

Removal or shortening of required waiting period

- Approved in California, Oregon, Vermont, Washington, Hawaii¹
- Proposed in Colorado, New Jersey²

2

Removal of residency requirement

- Approved in Oregon, Vermont³
- Proposed in New Jersey⁴

3

Expansion of who can prescribe lethal drugs

- Approved in Hawaii, Washington⁵
- Proposed in Colorado⁶

4

Expansion of assisted suicide to individuals who are not dying

- **Proposed in California:** Remove six-month terminal illness prognosis requirement; allow early to mid-stage dementia patients to request assisted suicide.⁷
- **Proposed in Oregon:** Explicitly expand the definition of “terminal disease” to include individuals with “a degenerative condition that will, at some point in the future, be the cause of a patient’s death.”⁸

1. California SB 380 of 2021, Oregon SB 579 of 2019, Vermont S.74 of 2022, Washington SB 5179 of 2023, Hawaii HB 650 of 2023 2. Colorado 24-068, New Jersey A4921 of 2023 3. Oregon HB 2279 of 2023, Vermont S.26 of 2023 4. New Jersey A1880 of 2024 5. Hawaii HB 650 of 2023, Washington SB 5179 of 2023 6. Colorado 24-068 7. California SB 1196 of 2024 8. Oregon HB 2903 of 2019 9. cthl.cc/twjot, pages 12 and 14 10. cthl.cc/hztra



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