

To access a self-determination End of Life option through



LIFECIRCLE/ETERNAL SPIRIT in Basel Switzerland

There are TWO related organizations you should know about:

(1) LIFECIRCLE is an association providing **palliative care** to adults in Switzerland or abroad.

If pain and shortness of breath can be made bearable only with extremely high dose of medicine, a dose can be applied through which life is shortened as a part of palliative care. But, in contrast to the assisted voluntary death (AVD), in palliative care a deadly dose of any drug will never be applied.

If the patient wishes that he or she does not want to be aware any more of the suffering, **palliative sedation** may be asked for. This means that he or she will receive a subcutaneous drop of morphine and a sedative, which will lead to a coma-like state.

LIFECIRCLE offers advice on palliative care to clinics and palliative therapies at home.

(2) **ETERNAL SPIRIT provides legal AVD (assisted voluntary death)**. It is available to members of LIFECIRCLE. AVD means that the member applies the legal drug in the presence of an employee of ETERNAL SPIRIT, who has experience in AVD. AVD very often takes place in the presence of relative, friends or acquaintance, always according to the wishes of the member.

On the appointed day when the AVD takes place, the member can either (a) drink the lethal medication in which case the member takes a drug that prevents vomiting 20 minutes before taking the deadly drug or (b) by an intravenous drip of sodium-pentobarbital, in which case no anti-vomiting medication is needed. The drop must be opened by the person him or herself. The supply of the drug will be filmed. This is the only reliable evidence that proves that the member has executed the application himself or herself and in full awareness. Falling asleep occurs within a few minutes; death usually follows within minutes, in the case of IV-application, or a little longer in the case of drinking.

People with a disease that is incurable and clearly leads to reduction in quality of life, although it does not lead to death in the near future (such as dementia, multiple sclerosis, motor neuron disease, quadriplegia, to mention just a few) are eligible for AVD.

Steps to accessing AVD at ETERNAL SPIRIT in Basel, Switzerland:

(It is wise to start the process 3-4 months before your preferred date.)

1. Join LIFECIRCLE

Go to www.lifecircle.ch. Select ENGLISH at the top of the site. Scroll down to “Apply for membership.” You will see that annual membership is 50 Swiss francs. (\$52) Lifetime membership is 1000 Swiss francs. (\$1045) Click on “Registration.”

- (a) This will bring up a screen where you can select annual membership OR lifetime membership, and you can enter information about yourself and your address.
- (b) You will receive a confirmation and an invoice, as well as a form for a Living Will.
- (c) Then go back to “Apply for membership” and click on “Bank Accounts.” In the first box (“Membership fee only”) you will find how to address a bank transfer. Contact your bank to arrange Swiss francs to be transferred to LIFECIRCLE.
- (d) **Mail** your invoice with verification that your bank has transferred the Swiss francs. **Mail** to LIFECIRCLE, Fichtlirain 16, CH-4104 Biel-Benken.
- (e) In a few weeks you will receive a **membership card** that includes a Username and Password. You are asked to submit your **Living Will** (either through the website or by postal mail.)

2. **Access AVD services.** As a member of LIFECIRCLE, you are eligible to submit an application for AVD. This is in the form of a **personal letter which must be signed** (preferably typed) in which you request that ETERNAL SPIRIT prepare an AVD for you and explain your circumstances – the reasons for your request, your medical condition and prognosis, and how all this affects your desire not to continue living. This should be accompanied by a **biographical brief** describing your personal and family circumstances (preferably typed). This must include the views of your next of kin. Does your family support your intention? Will someone to go Basel with you - family members and/or a friend? Also, you must include **medical reports**: one or more up-to-date medical reports (no older than 3 to 6 months), one older medical report with all diagnoses. The reports should include all diagnoses, present state of health, prognosis, treatment and current medication. This application must be accompanied by the preparation fee of CHD 3000. If ETERNALSPIRIT cannot accept you, CHF 1000 will be

refunded. (The balance will cover the doctor's fees and other costs that have to be paid.)

The complete request is transferred to a Swiss doctor. If he or she agrees that your condition justifies AVD and your documents are in order, ETERNAL SPIRIT gives you the "provisional green light" and provides further information concerning your journey to Switzerland and your stay there.

3. Once the provisional "green light" has been given, you can **decide on an approximate date.** Tell ETERNAL SPIRIT as early as possible when you want to make use of their services.
4. **When making travel** arrangement request wheelchair assistance with airlines. ETERNALSPIRIT can provide you with information so that you can make arrangements for an ambulance or a taxi to pick you up at the airport and bring you to your hotel.
5. **Two detailed discussions with two different Swiss doctors are compulsory, during which it will be clarified whether the death wish meets with Swiss guidelines. The doctor will check that you can swallow the barbiturate unaided or open the valve to the intravenous yourself. The second consultation will occur one day after the first to confirm that you have not changed your mind. He or she will then write the prescription. ETERNALSPIRIT will set up the doctor appointments for the member.**

Persons from the U.S. should expect to stay in Switzerland for at least 3-4 days before an AVD can be realized. ETERNALSPIRIT will suggest hotels, but the member must make the reservation.

6. **Member must make arrangements for the body following the AVD services.** U.S. members are advised to accept a **cremation.** (An urn can easily be transferred home or the ashes can be dispersed in Switzerland.)
7. **As soon as the second Swiss doctor gives the O.K.,** the AVD will take place the day after on the premises of ETERNAL SPIRIT.
8. **The member signs his or her wish for dying once again, on the day the ADV takes place.**
9. **Just prior to the AVD the member will sign several documents** needed by the Swiss authorities. One of these is a Power of Attorney to the President of ETERNALSPIRIT to enable him or her to handle your case with the local authority.

Costs for AVD service:

1. Membership in LIFECIRCLE. (50 francs or 1000 francs)
2. 3000 Swiss francs (\$3140) – preparatory fee to ETERNAL SPIRIT for AVD service (paid via bank transfer.)
3. 1000 Swiss francs (\$1045) for two medical consultation
4. 3000 Swiss francs (\$3140) for completion of the AVD services.
5. Fr.120-Fr.250 ((\$126-\$261) per day per person or room, depending on the hotel for hotel stay for 3-4 days in Basel for members and companions prior to AVD.
6. Airfare and transfer expenses to Switzerland for member and others accompanying the member, including travel to and from doctors and hotel and to ETERNALSPIRIT premises.
7. 500 Swiss francs (\$505) for official procedures following a death in Switzerland.
8. 2500 francs (\$2614) for funeral director and creation.

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