

Are San Diego County Hospices Cooperating with the California SB380 Requirement to Post their End of Life Option Act policy on their website? Most are not.

How would you feel if a hospice gave you wrong information regarding a legally available option?

I would hope that every Hemlock Society of San Diego (HSSD) member knows that Medical Aid in Dying (MAiD) is legal in CA and available. Death-phobic people who do not plan their deaths may rely on professionals, such as hospice workers, to inform them of choices.

We expect professionals to provide accurate and timely information, but that does not always happen. The wife of California resident, terminally ill Chris Davis, 29, tells us about the catastrophically bad information they were given from a hospice and the needless suffering her husband endured:

“A religious hospital in Southern California that treated Chris forbids doctors from prescribing aid-in-dying medication. This hospital referred us to a hospice that misinformed us by wrongly saying it was illegal in California and then contradicted itself by saying that the only doctor who would offer to write a prescription was located in Northern California. Hospice officials also said Chris would most likely need two to six months to complete the entire process, when in fact a patient can get through the process in a minimum of 15 days.”

How HSSD is trying to empower terminally ill patients

HSSD sincerely hopes a horrific incident like the above never occurs again. We have reviewed hospice websites and sent non-compliant hospices a “[Best Practices Checklist](#)” that should prove helpful in complying with the policy posting requirement. The list was created and provided by the [American Clinician’s Academy on Medical Aid in Dying](#). Our snail-mail letter also informed the hospices that the American Clinician’s Academy on Medical Aid in Dying has a patient-to-doctor referral system for MAiD.

In an ideal world, each hospice would have a physician on staff willing to prescribe a life-ending drug. The small number of hospices that do “participate” in the EOLOA often use a non-hospice service, most often incurring hefty fees, although we are aware of instances where an indigent person received pro bono service.

HOSPICES who support the End of Life Option Act and have posted information on their website:

AccentCare (previously Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care of California -San Diego). They fully participate. They state they have a 24/7 call center staffed by their own nurses to answer questions about EOLOA. A clear statement, although it is buried under Patients & Families/Hospice & Palliative Care/Helpful Resources/ End of Life Planning (at bottom of page). The page with EOLOA info is titled “laws & relations.”

[Click here to view AccentCare's statement](#)

Apreva A nice video on their homepage describes the process.

[Click here to view Apreva's video](#)

Silverado Hospice will not prohibit any hospice physician or hospice employee from voluntarily participating in the activities described under the Option Act EXCEPT that (1) no hospice physician or hospice employee will sign as a witness the Request for an Aid-In-Dying Drug form and (2) no hospice employee that is not employed as a licensed nurse shall assist the patient in preparation of the aid-in-dying drug prior to self-administration.

[Click here to view Silverado's statement](#)

Topkare a clear policy with links to the Empowered Endings website (Dr. Bob Uslander).

[Click here to view Topkare's statement](#)

HOSPICES that mention EOLOA on their website, but their statements are vague:

Elizabeth Hospice.

[View their Policy](#)

Lightbridge.

[View Their Policy](#)

“WILL NOT PARTICIPATE” In the End of Life Option Act Policy and have posted a statement:

Vitas: Not only do they hide their policy, but they have marked their page to NOT be indexed by search engines such as Google. Be cautious reading this page. The beginning of the page sounds like they might be supportive but the last two sentences say (as of 7/2/22): VITAS staff:

- Will not bear any responsibility for ensuring the regulatory requirements are followed.
- Will not provide, deliver, dispense, administer, or assist in any manner with the aid-in-dying drug.

Absolute Home Health Palliative Care and Hospice

Elite Health Care Systems Serving East County, Julian. Will not participate, but do post links to ACAMAID.org website & email.

Salus. Will refer patients to medical providers.

San Diego HOSPITALS that have posted policies on the End of Life Option Act:

Two local hospitals allow willing doctors to prescribe, but do NOT allow ingestion at their hospital.

★ **UC Health.** Their policy states that they will not accept not current UCSD patients solely for the purpose of The End of Life Option Act (EOLOA). The page for the general public correctly states that SB380 does not allow ingestion in a “public place,” then immediately goes on to say that UC Health does not allow ingestion in any of their facilities; leading the casual reader to believe the law imposes this requirement. It does not; SB380 clearly states a health care entity is not a public place.

[Click here to read UC Health San Diego’s policy page for the general public.](#)

[Click here to read UC Health San Diego’s policy and procedure page.](#)

★ **Kaiser.** Their clear policy states the process can take 3 weeks and that it can take up to 7 days to obtain the drugs once the prescription has been written.

[Click here to read Kaiser’s policy.](#)

Both hospitals have a staff member (consultant or navigator) available to guide people through the process.

Sharp hospital has 3 in-patient hospice facilities, Bonitaview Home, Lakeview Home and Parkview Home. The 3 in-patient hospices have a total bed count of 14.¹ Their policy states: Sharp HospiceCare does not provide or refer patients to physicians who serve as attending physicians for EOLOA and do not allow ingestion at their 3 in-patient hospice facilities. They might prescribe, if your doctor is “affiliated.” Hospital ingestion may be allowed in “unusual and rare circumstances. “

[Click here to view the policy](#)

Scripps Hospital has not posted a policy.

If you have information or would like to contribute in any way, please let us know.

You may wish to read George Will’s article, [***Medical aid in dying is for preventing a hideous death, not for truncating an unhappy life***](#)

And the article by [***Chris Davis’ wife explaining their end of life trauma.***](#)

According to the California Public Health Dept., in 2022 there were 4 facilities with hospice licenses with a total of 23 beds in San Diego County.

¹ Data from Ca Dept. of Public Health licensing section.