

Voluntary assisted dying

Advance care planning

Voluntary assisted dying gives people who are suffering and dying, and who meet eligibility criteria, the option of requesting medical assistance to end their lives. It is available to eligible Queenslanders from 1 January 2023.

More information about voluntary assisted dying is available on the [Queensland Health website](#).

Advance care planning and voluntary assisted dying

Advance care planning is relevant to all adults regardless of their health status or age. It provides an opportunity for people to think, discuss, and plan for the medical treatment and care they wish to receive in the future if they **lose decision-making capacity**. Advance care planning documents can only operate for health care when you do not have capacity.

Advance care planning is an important process no matter your end-of-life choice. It can help to give you choice and control over future health care decisions if there was a time when you were **unable to make those decisions for yourself**.

Voluntary assisted dying is different as it allows eligible people with decision-making capacity, who are suffering intolerably and dying, an additional end-of-life choice by allowing them to choose the timing and circumstance of their death. To access voluntary assisted dying, you must **have decision-making capacity** at each stage of the process and can only request and access it when you are **able to make those decisions for yourself**.

More information about the eligibility criteria for voluntary assisted dying is available on the [Queensland Health website](#).

Can I request voluntary assisted dying in my advance care planning document?

No. Although you may express a preference for voluntary assisted dying as an end-of-life choice in your advance care planning documents, the law does not allow for this request to be followed.

In accordance with the eligibility criteria, a request to access voluntary assisted dying must be made by you and can only occur while you have decision-making capacity in relation to voluntary assisted dying.

Can my substitute decision-maker request voluntary assisted dying for me?

No. A substitute decision-maker (including those appointed through the advance care planning process) cannot request voluntary assisted dying on your behalf.

Advance care planning documents commonly used in Queensland

Advance health directive

This is a legally binding document that can be used in certain circumstances to provide directions about future health care and to appoint an attorney for health matters. A doctor or nurse practitioner is required to complete the certificate stating the person has capacity to make the document. To be complete, an advance health directive must also be witnessed by an eligible witness.

Enduring power of attorney ([short](#)/[long](#))

These documents allow a person to legally appoint an attorney (or attorneys) and set out terms for how the power operates. These documents must be witnessed by an eligible witness.

Statement of choices

This is a values-based document that records a person's wishes and preferences for their health care into the future. It is not legally binding and does not provide consent to health care in advance. A doctor or nurse practitioner signs and dates the form but it does not require witnessing.

What to do with your completed advance care planning documents

Share copies of the completed documents with your family, decision-makers, GP and important others. You are also able to have your advance care planning documents uploaded to your Queensland Health electronic record so that they are easily available to authorised clinicians involved in your care when they are required.

To do this, send a copy/scan of your documents to the Statewide Office of Advance Care Planning via:

- **email:** acp@health.qld.gov.au
- **post:** PO Box 2274, Runcorn, Queensland, 4113
- **Fax:** 1300 008 227

More information

- **The Statewide Office of Advance Care Planning** provides a free, confidential service for all Queenslanders to assist with the process of advance care planning. For advance care planning information, resources or support, you can contact the office on 1300 007 227.
- **QVAD-Support** provides information and support for people wishing to access voluntary assisted dying, carers, family members and healthcare workers and can be contacted at:
 - **email:** QVADSupport@health.qld.gov.au
 - **phone:** 1800 431 371 (Mon-Fri, 8.30am – 4.00pm, excluding public holidays – available from 1 January 2023).