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<b>End of Life Option Act</b>	

**Printed copies are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy for the latest version.**

**Policy:**

Kaweah Delta Health Care District is committed to providing high quality end of life care that attends to the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of the patient and his or her family. This care is grounded in the values of respecting the sacredness of life, providing compassionate care to dying and vulnerable persons, and respecting the integrity of health care providers. Kaweah Delta Health Care District believes that compassionate end of life care should neither prolong nor hasten the natural dying process and is committed to providing appropriate support for dying persons and their families through the final stages of life. Inherent in this process is ensuring support for patient self-determination through the appropriate use of palliative consultation services to assist in goals of care clarification, effective pain and symptom management, ongoing social, spiritual and pastoral support and referral for hospice care when appropriate.

Passage of the California End of Life Option act necessitates Kaweah Delta Health Care District establish policies/procedures related to this act to ensure appropriate guidance and support for patients, families as well as hospital and medical staff on this important issue. The following represents the District’s current position. This policy will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

**Procedure:**

- I. Patients, families, hospital and medical staff are encouraged to discuss and fully explore care and treatment options for terminally ill patients. As part of that discussion, requests for physician-assisted death or self-administered life-ending medication may occur. Any member of a patient care team may respond to questions from a patient and family, however, should discussion of the End of Life Option Act represent a values conflict for a staff member, they are asked to refer the patient/family to another appropriate staff member.
  
- II. In response to patient and family requests for GENERAL information regarding the End of Life Option Act, District staff may provide the patient/family with the following websites and/or the attached pamphlet designed to provide general

information. Websites: [www.compassionandchoices.com](http://www.compassionandchoices.com) and/or [www.coalitionccc.org](http://www.coalitionccc.org) .

- III. In response to patient and family requests for SPECIFIC discussion regarding possible use of the End of Life Option for currently hospitalized patients District and Medical staff will consider referral for Palliative Consultation to assist in goals of care clarification, and assessment of current pain and symptom management as well as social and spiritual issues to ensure the patient's end of life care is optimized. If the request for specific discussion regarding possible use of the End of Life Option is initiated by an established patient in Kaweah Delta Hospice, Kaweah Delta Home Health Palliative Care or the Chronic Disease Management Center, staff in each of these agencies will collaborate with members of the patient's Interdisciplinary Team to explore physical, emotional or spiritual care needs and will discuss care needs and potential care plan changes with patient, family and all appropriate providers. The Palliative Care Team will remain available to these agencies for further consultation as needed.
- IV. Kaweah Delta Health Care District employees, contractors, volunteers and Medical Staff members while on premises owned or under the management or direct control of Kaweah Delta Health Care District or while acting within the course and scope of any employment by, or contract with Kaweah Delta Health Care District may not knowingly participate in or facilitate physician-assisted death and may not provide, deliver, administer, or assist with the administration of any medication intended for physician-assisted death, or be present when a patient ingests medication with the intent of completing physician-assisted death.
- V. When a patient expresses intent to pursue physician-assisted death, the patient will be informed of the above stated policy, Kaweah Delta Health Care District staff and medical staff members will continue to provide all other appropriate palliative and supportive care services to patient and families, regardless of their stated interest in seeking physician-assisted death.
- VI. Bioethics Consultation Services will be available to assist patients, families; hospital and medical staff members in addressing concerns related to the End of Life Option Act.

**Related Documents:**  
**CHA and Consent Manual**

**References:**  
**None**

*"These guidelines, procedures, or policies herein do not represent the only medically or legally acceptable approach, but rather are presented with the recognition that acceptable approaches exist. Deviations under appropriate circumstances do not represent a breach of a medical standard of care. New knowledge, new techniques, clinical or research data, clinical experience, or clinical or bio-ethical circumstances may provide sound reasons for alternative approaches, even though they are not described in the document."*