

**YES! on I-1000**  
**The Washington State Death with Dignity Initiative**  
*a 2008 initiative to allow terminally ill adults end of life choices*

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Washington State is joining Oregon in taking an important and humane step towards improving care for terminally ill adults. Led by former Governor Booth Gardner, a broad coalition of physicians, nurses, hospice patients, family members, organizations, community leaders and concerned residents launched the Death with Dignity initiative for the 2008 ballot. This measure will give tremendous peace of mind to terminally ill patients who face prolonged suffering at end of life.

This initiative will allow mentally competent, terminally ill adult residents of Washington State diagnosed with six months or less to live the legal choice to obtain and self-administer life-ending medication. Eligible patients would have the option to make a voluntary, legal, informed, and personal decision with their physician and their families, with numerous safeguards to protect the patient from influence or coercion.

**This important initiative:**

1. **Allows patients in the final stages of a terminal disease to openly consider the choice to end their life with dignity**, on their own terms. Many may consider this choice, but based on the 10-year experience with this law in Oregon, few will exercise it. Currently our state restricts the personal freedom of terminally ill patients who face a lingering and painful death from having this humane, legal end of life choice.
2. **Gives terminally ill adults the peace of mind to know they are in control of their final days.** Some terminally ill people experience intolerable suffering that cannot be alleviated, even by the most skilled palliative or hospice care. Patients should be able to have a legal choice to request, receive, and self-administer medication in order to die on their own terms if suffering becomes unbearable.
3. **Includes numerous safeguards for patients.** To participate, a patient must be:
  - ♦ at least 18 years old and a Washington State resident and;
  - ♦ mentally capable of making and communicating health care decisions for him/herself and;
  - ♦ diagnosed with a terminal illness that will lead to death within six months.

Safeguards also include the following:

- ♦ Two physicians determine whether these criteria have been met.
- ♦ The attending physician must inform the patient of feasible alternatives including comfort care, hospice care and pain control.
- ♦ All decisions made by the patient must be entirely voluntary.
- ♦ The application process includes two oral requests and one written request, a waiting period, and objective witnesses.
- ♦ No one other than the eligible patient may administer the oral medication.
- ♦ The patient may revoke her/ his decision at any time.

4. **Mirrors Oregon's "Death with Dignity" Act.** Vote [www.yeson1000.org/pdfs/FactSheet.pdf](http://www.yeson1000.org/pdfs/FactSheet.pdf). As of August 20, 2008, to be safe and effective. Criteria and safeguards are **the date of my article's publication.**