

# Voluntary Assisted Dying

## What's happening with voluntary assisted dying in South Australia?

As Chair of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Taskforce, I'm pleased to be able to update you on the progress towards implementation of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Pathway in South Australia.



The [Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021 \(the Act\)](#) sets out a framework to enable eligible people suffering from a terminal illness to choose the manner and timing of their death. The Act provides for one of the safest voluntary assisted dying pathways in the world.

Voluntary assisted dying is about choice. It provides an option for eligible individuals who are terminally ill and suffering intolerably as they near the end of their life. As Taskforce Chair, I am committed to supporting the introduction of an accessible, and equitable pathway for voluntary assisted dying, while ensuring that we uphold the integrity of the strong safeguards embedded in the Act.

To ensure this approach, the Taskforce expertise includes health practitioners, legal experts, educators, health sector executives and consumer advocates. Since December 2021, the Taskforce has been working alongside SA Health to support the health system and community in preparation for commencement of voluntary assisted dying in January 2023, two months earlier than initially planned.

This earlier commencement has been supported by the detailed work undertaken by the Implementation Working Groups and Implementation Team.



# Voluntary Assisted Dying

## Key Achievements

Nine work streams have been established to develop the complex clinical, operational and administrative processes required to safely deliver voluntary assisted dying.

### We have:

- Undertaken extensive research into how voluntary assisted dying has been implemented in other Australian and international jurisdictions to inform service design and ensure that public and private service providers are adequately prepared to make voluntary assisted dying available in South Australia.
- Mapped a person's journey through the voluntary assisted dying pathway to inform the design of services that are safe, timely and accessible for all South Australians who are eligible, regardless of their location.
- Engaged with more than 500 health practitioners to understand their willingness to participate in the Pathway and identify potential barriers that need to be addressed, resulting in a cohort of over 50 medical practitioners identifying as willing and able to be trained in voluntary assisted dying.
- Started developing a suite of multilingual community information resources to allow our culturally diverse community to have ready access to information about voluntary assisted dying.
- Designed a model for a Care Navigator Service to provide care coordination, education and support for people accessing voluntary assisted dying, based on successful models implemented in other States.
- Developed regulations to support the Act which were tabled in Parliament and published online.
- Received and assessed more than 100 expressions of interest for the Voluntary Assisted Dying Review Board to act as the regulatory body and ensure the safeguards of the Act are maintained, with the inaugural Board members expected to be announced soon.

### We are:

- Developing Clinical Guidelines to assist health practitioners to understand the Act and their roles and responsibilities in the voluntary assisted dying process.



# Voluntary Assisted Dying

- Designing a model for a Pharmacy Service that will oversee the process of procuring, storing, prescribing, supplying, and administering the voluntary assisted dying substance.
- Developing a suite of resources and services to support the implementation of voluntary assisted dying, including readiness toolkits for the health, aged care and disability sectors.
- Developing pathways to support vulnerable communities, and looking at ways to improve access for regional communities and access to qualified interpreters
- Developing an online education and training package to allow medical practitioners to have timely access to mandatory training requirements regardless of their location.
- Working to build an IT portal to streamline the application process and ease the administrative workload for coordinating and consulting medical practitioners.
- Undertaking continued engagement with the community, public and private health services, and aged care and disability services to increase awareness, provide information and support, and understand their needs in relation to participating in the voluntary assisted dying process.
- Developing a community of practice, to ensure that medical practitioners, care navigators, pharmacists, and other health practitioners who support people in voluntary assisted dying are themselves supported as they undertake this challenging work.

I look forward to sharing further updates as we progress towards implementing this important work. The best way to stay up to date is through the [SA Health webpage for voluntary assisted dying](#). You can also subscribe to the mailing list by contacting [Health.VoluntaryAssistedDying@sa.gov.au](mailto:Health.VoluntaryAssistedDying@sa.gov.au) with the subject line “Join the mailing list”.

Dr Chris Moy

Chair, Voluntary Assisted Dying Implementation Taskforce

