

VOLUNTARY Assisted Dying (VAD) Procedure

Aged Care Services

POLICY STATEMENT

Capecare acknowledges and respects the legal right of eligible Western Australians to access Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) under the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019 (WA). Capecare supports consumer choice and autonomy, ensuring that any person seeking VAD is treated with compassion, dignity, and respect. Care is provided within a human rights framework, upholding autonomy, informed consent, and equitable access, while respecting the rights of staff to conscientious objection. Capecare remains committed to providing high-quality palliative and end-of-life care alongside support for consumers who choose to explore or proceed with VAD.

PURPOSE

To provide clear guidance for staff supporting consumers who enquire about, request, or undertake Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) within Capecare’s Residential Aged Care and Home Care programs. This procedure ensures compliance with Western Australian legislation and alignment with the Strengthened Quality Standards, particularly Standards 1 (The Person), 2 (The Organisation), and 5 (Clinical Care).

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all Capecare employees, contractors, and volunteers working within Residential Aged Care, Home Care, and Community programs.

DEFINITIONS

- VAD (Voluntary Assisted Dying): A legal process allowing an eligible person to end their life through the administration of a prescribed substance, as per the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019 (WA).
- Conscientious Objection: The right of staff to decline participation in VAD on personal, ethical, or religious grounds, without prejudice.
- VAD Substance: The pharmacological agent prescribed and approved for use under the Act.

PRINCIPLES

- Respect for Autonomy – Consumers have the right to make informed decisions about their care and end of life.
- Informed Consent – Participation in VAD must be voluntary and informed at all stages.
- Non-Coercion – Consumers must not be pressured or influenced to request or proceed with VAD.

Document Title: ACS SOP Voluntary Assisted Dying Procedure					
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- Refraining from Raising VAD – All discussions about VAD must be commenced by the older person. In their capacity as Capecare employees, all staff are prohibited from raising the topic for discussion.
- Dignity of Risk – Individuals are supported to make choices consistent with their values and beliefs.
- Confidentiality – All discussions and records related to VAD are managed with strict confidentiality.
- Staff Rights – Staff may conscientiously object but must refer enquiries appropriately.

PROCEDURE

Initial Enquiry

If a consumer expresses interest in VAD:

1. Listen empathetically and without judgment.
2. Do not attempt to influence or dissuade.
3. Refer the consumer to their treating medical practitioner or the WA VAD Care Navigator Service.
4. Document the enquiry in the consumer record using neutral, factual language.
5. Notify the Facility Manager or Care Coordinator.

Contact: WA VAD Care Navigator Service – 9431 2755 or visit <https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/voluntaryassisteddying>

Assessment and Approval Process

Only a Coordinating and Consulting Medical Practitioner approved under the Act may assess eligibility. Capecare staff must not participate in eligibility assessments but facilitate access to privacy and support. Consumers may withdraw from the process at any time.

Preparation for VAD

Once approval is confirmed, the Facility Manager or Clinical Care Coordinator liaises with the VAD practitioner to coordinate timing, privacy, and support. Appropriate space and emotional, cultural, and spiritual support are ensured. Staff directly involved must have completed relevant WA Health VAD training.

Pharmacological Agent Management

Pre-Administration:

- Only authorised practitioners may obtain and store the VAD substance.
- The VAD substance must not be kept in Capecare medication systems.
- Staff must not transport, dispense, or prepare the VAD substance.

Administration:

- May occur via self-administration or practitioner administration.
- Capecare staff not authorised under the Act must not assist with administration.

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Post-Administration:

- The coordinating practitioner certifies death and arranges lawful disposal of remaining substance.
- Capecare staff follow the Actions on Death Procedure and provide support to family and staff.

Documentation

Maintain clear, factual records in the consumer file. All documentation must comply with privacy and confidentiality standards.

Conscientious Objection

Staff may decline participation in VAD by notifying their line manager. The manager ensures consumer care continuity through alternate arrangements. Professionalism and respect for consumer rights must always be maintained.

Post-Event Support

Provide debriefing and counselling to staff, residents, and family members. Conduct a reflective review to identify support or procedural improvements while maintaining confidentiality.

Education and Training

Capecare ensures all relevant staff receive ongoing education on the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019 (WA), Strengthened Quality Standards, and internal VAD procedures. Access to WA Health VAD modules and Care Navigator guidance is facilitated.

References
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2019 (WA) - Medicines and Poisons Act 2014 (WA) - Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (ACQSC, 2024) - Charter of Aged Care Rights - WA Health VAD Guidelines (2023) - Capecare Actions on Death Procedure - Capecare Palliation Procedure - Capecare Privacy and Confidentiality Procedure

Related Documents

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