



**Dying
With Dignity**
Queensland Inc.

VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING IN QUEENSLAND

INFORMATION FOR GPs, MEDICAL SPECIALISTS
& NURSE PRACTITIONERS

DIGNITY AND CHOICE AT THE END OF LIFE

NEW LEGAL PROCESS FOR VAD BEGINS 1 JANUARY 2023



SCROLL DOWN TO SEE:

What is VAD?

The doctor's role in VAD

Safeguards/oversight

**How can I be involved:
registration & training**

Links to resources

WHAT IS VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING? (VAD)

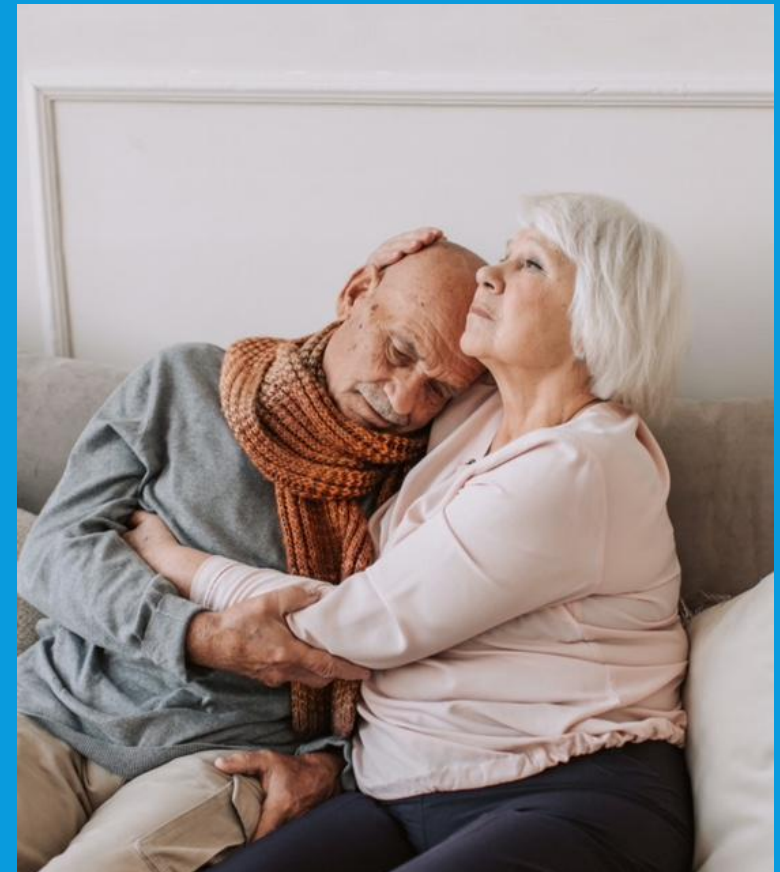
- VAD allows a terminally ill patient over the age of 18, who is a resident of Queensland, to make a legal choice about the timing and circumstances of their death.

VAD is part of the spectrum of care for people at the end of their lives.

- VOLUNTARY: The request must come from a patient with an advanced, progressive disease that is likely to cause death within 12 months, causing intolerable suffering. The person must have decision-making capacity & be free from coercion.
- Only the patient can make this request. They can withdraw from the process at any point.
- ASSISTED: A 3 stage process of request, assessment and review to determine eligibility. Prescription and safe delivery of a legal substance. Patient may take this in their own time, or with assistance from doctor/nurse specialist if self-administration is not possible.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

- Patient makes clear 1st request to doctor (GP or specialist)
- Doctor makes assessment, records on QVAD form
If patient eligible, dr. refers to consulting practitioner
- Consulting practitioner – usually a specialist in patient's condition – makes independent assessment
- Patient makes clear written 2nd request in presence of 2 independent witnesses
Doctor submits forms to QVAD
- Patient makes clear final request, doctor submits form.
Minimum of 9 days from first to final request
- Substance safely dispensed from Statewide QVAD Pharmacy Service



WHAT IS THE DOCTOR'S ROLE IN VAD?

EVERY PRACTITIONER WILL HAVE THEIR OWN LEVEL OF COMFORT WITHIN THE VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING PROCESS.

- You may discuss & provide information about VAD to a patient
- **If VAD is not consistent with your beliefs, you must immediately let the patient know your views.**

You are legally required to refer them to QVAD-Support or to a practitioner who's a VAD provider.

As a VAD certified practitioner there are several roles you may undertake, such as:

- You can provide an assessment as a Consulting Medical Practitioner.
- You can act as the primary or "Co-ordinating" Medical Practitioner, ensuring that all eligibility requirements are met
- You can provide advice and support for patients choosing self-administration of the substance.
- And you may be the administering practitioner, if requested by a patient who is unable to self-administer the substance because of their illness.

YOU ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE QVAD TEAM



- You will be working alongside others in the health care team, nurses, allied health professionals & pharmacists
- Up to **80%** of the patients requesting VAD are likely to also be receiving palliative care services.
- **QVAD-Support**, the Queensland State “navigator” service, will provide information and guidance on the process
- **QVAD Handbook** (online) is your guide to the process. It contains all required documentation & copies of mandatory forms

SAFEGUARDS/OVERSIGHT

- The patient is the only person who can initiate their request for VAD & must make 3 separate, clear, documented requests, free from coercion
- Waiting period of minimum 9 days between 1st and final request
- Independent witnesses required at times of request/receiving medication
- Authorised VAD practitioners must meet eligibility and training requirements
- QVAD-Support, Statewide navigator service, supports patient, family & carers through the process, provides information for practitioners
- QVAD Review Board oversees operation, reviews each case, produces reports

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

- Queensland VAD Implementation Unit – Chair, Prof. Keith McNeil – is currently establishing structures and procedures for VAD.
- Eligible medical practitioners can now register their interest in participating:
[***VADImplementation@health.qld.gov.au***](mailto:VADImplementation@health.qld.gov.au)
- A medical practitioner must hold specialist registration/general registration/ specialist and general registration, with varying years of practice required
- Once assessed as eligible, the doctor undertakes mandatory online training, in the form of modules provided by QLD Health, available October 2022.
- Negotiations underway to seek CPD points for completing online modules
- VAD Implementation Conference Saturday 29 October 2022 – register on **Eventbrite** for free virtual attendance. Accredited for 14 RACGP CPD points.



RESOURCES

- QLD Health VAD: www.health.gov.qld.au/voluntary assisted dying - including Queensland Voluntary Assisted Dying Handbook: online resource
- vadanx.com.au: peer network of medical professionals nationwide across Australia and New Zealand, offering resources & support to those providing VAD services
- Drs4assisteddyingchoice.org
- dwdq.org.au: news, podcasts and resources
- QUT Australian Centre for Health Law Research: research.qut.edu.au/achlr