

Tuesday, 21 March 2023

## VOLUNTARY ASSISTED DYING UPDATE

Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) has now been available in South Australia for more than six weeks, giving people with a terminal illness the right to make the choice to die with dignity under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2021* (the Act).

The Act is operating as intended since it was passed on 31 January 2023, with all safeguards in place working effectively. Under the Act, a person with a terminal illness may access voluntary assisted dying in South Australia if they meet all eligibility criteria.

In the first six weeks since the legislation was passed, 32 people have made a first request to commence the process to access the pathway, and 11 permits have been issued by SA Health.

For many reasons, not all people who make a formal first request or who receive a permit, proceed to the final stage of the VAD process. SA Health is aware of at least six South Australians who have died after being administered or self-administering a voluntary assisted dying substance in accordance with the Act.

Under the new laws, people considering voluntary assisted dying should speak with their doctor for more information, with health practitioners legally unable to initiate discussions with individuals about VAD.

Access to voluntary assisted dying depends on the participation of eligible, willing, and trained practitioners. 44 medical practitioners have now completed the mandatory voluntary assisted dying training, and a further 54 have registered but not yet completed the training.

Alongside doctors, Care Navigators from the South Australian Voluntary Assisted Dying Care Navigator Service are available to assist people with accessing VAD. These are nursing and allied health professionals with experience in complex and end of life care who manage queries, encourage connections between services, and support referrals to participating medical practitioners.

For more information about VAD and the Care Navigator Service please visit the [SA Health Website](#).

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### For more information

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