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 Area **Administration**  
 Applicability **PeaceHealth  
 Systemwide**  
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## Advance Directives Policy

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all PeaceHealth settings and services:

Ambulatory Surgery Center	PeaceHealth Medical Group
Cottage Grove Medical Center	Sacred Heart RiverBend
Ketchikan Medical Center	Sacred Heart University District
Ketchikan Long Term Care	Southwest Medical Center
Peace Harbor Medical Center	St. John Medical Center
Peace Island Medical Center	St. Joseph Medical Center
PeaceHealth Home &Community	System Services Center
PeaceHealth Laboratories	United General Medical Center

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide care consistent with the mission and values of PeaceHealth, in recognition of the intrinsic worth and inherent dignity of those for whom we provide care.
- Ensure our patients are able to provide guidance to their loved ones, physicians, and Caregivers, regarding their wishes for healthcare treatments in the future, should they be unable to make these decisions for themselves.
- Ensure the implementation of the Federal Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA) of 1991, affirming a competent patient's right to make decisions about their healthcare, to accept or

refuse medical treatment, and to complete an advance healthcare directive.

- Offer education and assistance to patients and the public in the documentation of their preferences for medical treatment; including their right to accept or refuse treatment; and
- Ensure PeaceHealth is in compliance with state laws and regulatory body standards regarding formulation, documentation, and implementation of advance directives.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Advance Directives:** A voluntary formal document written in advance which provides direction to the health care team when an adult Patient loses decisional capacity. Living Wills, Directives to Physicians, Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare, are all forms of advance directives.
- **Caregiver:** An employee of PeaceHealth.
- **Directive to Physicians:** A Living Will used in the State of Washington (and other states).
- **Healthcare Representative:** A person appointed by the patient in a Durable Power of Attorney document to make decisions for the patient when they lose decisional capacity.
- **Patient:** Both the patient and/or the patient's legal personal representative.
- **Surrogate Decision-Maker:** A patient's legal decision-maker according to the laws of the State where the patient is receiving medical care. Generally, the order is as follows:
  - Legal Guardian appointed by the Courts
  - Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care
  - Legal Spouse
  - Adult children over the age of 18
  - Parents
  - Adult siblings over the age of 18
  - Please see your state laws for specifics, i.e. majority vs. unanimous consent within groups where there is more than one member, etc.

## POLICY

It is the policy of PeaceHealth, that in keeping with our mission and values, PeaceHealth supports patients and their surrogates right to participate in healthcare decision making and advance care planning. PeaceHealth offers assistance in formulating and documenting advance directives per Patient's wishes and ensures those wishes and directives are followed in accordance with standard medical practice and state and federal law.

- In the event a caregiver is unable to comply with a Patient's advance directives for legal, religious or cultural reasons, they must inform the patient (or surrogate) and arrange for transfer of care as per federal and state law.
- Formulation of advance directives is entirely voluntary, and a Patient may change or revoke an advance directive at any time, verbally or in writing. All PeaceHealth medical centers and clinics have procedures for the implementation of this policy within their facilities.
- Note: Washington state law requires Advanced Directives to be witnessed by two people, an

acknowledgment by a notary public or another individual authorized by law to take acknowledgements.

- In the event a patient has not completed advance directives naming a healthcare representative; state law designating the order of legal decision-makers will be followed.
- In the event the patient has completed an Advanced Directive but does not have it with them, there is a process for follow up reflected in the procedure.

## HELP

Further information may be obtained by contacting the local Mission, Ethics, or Spiritual Care Departments.

## RELATED MATERIAL

### Policies & Procedures:

- [Advance Directives for Patient Access in CareConnect](#)

### Laws & Regulations:

- Patient Self-Determination Act of 1991
- RCW 70.122 Natural Death Act
- RCW 70.122.030 Directive to Withhold or Withdraw Life Sustaining Treatment
- RCW 11.94 Power of Attorney
- ORS 127
- Alaska:
  - AS 13.52.010 et seq.
  - AS 12.65.007
  - 7 ACC 16.010
- 42 U.S.C. § 300a-7 (d)

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Owner **John Holmes:**  
 Ethics Educator  
 Area **Mission**  
 Applicability **PeaceHealth**  
 Systemwide  
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 Procedure

## Physician Assisted Suicide Policy

### SCOPE

This policy/procedure applies to all PeaceHealth settings and services checked below:

Ambulatory Surgery Center	PeaceHealth Medical Group
Cottage Grove Medical Center	Sacred Heart RiverBend
Ketchikan Medical Center	Sacred Heart University District
Ketchikan Long Term Care	Southwest Medical Center
Peace Harbor Medical Center	St. John Medical Center
Peace Island Medical Center	St. Joseph Medical Center
PeaceHealth Home & Community	System Services Center
PeaceHealth Laboratories	United General Medical Center

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy/procedure is to provide the requirements for appropriate support of dying persons and families while respecting PeaceHealth's position as set forth in its policy.

### DEFINITIONS

- Death with Dignity:** Defined under Oregon and Washington State laws, as when a terminally ill, informed adult voluntarily chooses to obtain a physician prescription for drugs to end his or her life and *self-administers* the drugs, thereby hastening his or her death following confirmation of a prognosis of dying in less than six (6) months. Prior to receiving this prescription, a patient must have a second physician's opinion regarding their terminal

diagnosis, make an oral and a written request, and reiterate the oral request to his or her attending physician no less than fifteen (15) days after making the initial oral request. The patient must also have counseling if either physician believes the patient has a mental disorder, or impaired judgment from depression, and be cleared of these by the person providing the counseling. Patients also have the choice whether to notify next of kin or not. Health care providers are immune from civil and criminal liability for good faith compliance.

- **Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (ERDs):** A document published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that provides ethical and religious guidance to be followed by any and all Catholic health systems wishing to maintain a Catholic identity.
- **Physician Assisted Suicide:** A volitional choice – deemed wrong according to the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church – to hasten one's death via the self-administration of lethal medication obtained from a physician which directly causes one's death.

## POLICY

As a Catholic health system, PeaceHealth does not promote or participate in physician assisted suicide (PAS, known by some as Death with Dignity or DWD). (See ERD 60.) Patients wanting information on PAS should consult their provider.

## OVERVIEW

PAS is a volitional choice – deemed wrong according to the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church – to hasten one's death via the self-administration of lethal medication obtained from a physician which directly causes one's death. As a Catholic health system, PeaceHealth is prohibited from participating in assisted suicide. (See ERD 60.) PeaceHealth understands that some treatments may be considered extraordinarily or disproportionately burdensome at the end of life and thereby recognizes a patient's right to forgo such treatment. (See ERDs 57 and 58.)

## PROCEDURE

1. Patients voicing an interest in pursuing PAS should be asked about the reasons for their interest to determine if modalities offered by PeaceHealth may help, and receive a palliative care consult, a spiritual care consult, a hospice eligibility intake assessment, and/or information from their provider about relevant community resources as appropriate.
2. Patients pursuing PAS independently who are also hospice eligible may be admitted to a PeaceHealth hospice program with the intent of receiving hospice care consistent with PeaceHealth's mission and values.
3. Patients in the hospital voicing an interest in pursuing PAS who are not hospice eligible should receive a palliative care consult, a referral for spiritual care, and/or information from their provider about relevant community resources as appropriate.
4. PeaceHealth caregivers or providers with conscience objections should follow the process outlined in the [Objections of Conscience Policy](#).

# HELP

Further information may be obtained by contacting Mission Services.

## REFERENCES

- Oregon Health Authority, <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/providerpartnerresources/evaluationresearch/deathwithdignityact/pages/index.aspx>
- Washington State Department of Health, <https://www.doh.wa.gov/youandyourfamily/illnessanddisease/deathwithdignityact>
- Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (ERDs), 6th Edition, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. 2018.

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 Ethics Educator  
 Area **Mission**  
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 Systemwide  
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 Procedure

## Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking Policy

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all PeaceHealth settings and services checked below:

Ambulatory Surgery Center	PeaceHealth Medical Group
Cottage Grove Medical Center	Sacred Heart RiverBend
Ketchikan Medical Center	Sacred Heart University District
Ketchikan Long Term Care	Southwest Medical Center
Peace Harbor Medical Center	St. John Medical Center
Peace Island Medical Center	St. Joseph Medical Center
PeaceHealth Home & Community	System Services Center
PeaceHealth Laboratories	United General Medical Center

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the PeaceHealth position on "voluntarily stopping eating and drinking" (aka VSED).

### DEFINITIONS

- **Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (ERDs):** A document published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that provides ethical and religious guidance to be followed by any and all Catholic healthcare systems wishing to maintain a Catholic identity.

- **Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking:** A volitional choice – deemed wrong according to the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church – to refuse oral food and fluids for the purpose of hastening death via the process of terminal dehydration.

## POLICY

As a Catholic health system, PeaceHealth does not promote or participate in voluntarily stopping eating and drinking (VSED) to hasten death. (See ERDs 58 and 60.) Patients wanting information on VSED should consult their provider.

## OVERVIEW

VSED is a volitional choice – deemed wrong according to the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church – to refuse oral food and fluids for the purpose of hastening death via the process of terminal dehydration. VSED is distinct from the withdrawal of burdensome medical treatment (such as a feeding tube) or deciding to stop eating and drinking due to an inability to receive oral food and fluids because of burdens related to a medical condition. Individuals who successfully complete VSED die from dehydration brought on by the voluntary choice to refuse to take oral food and fluids. Individuals deciding to pursue VSED may or may not have a terminal medical condition. As a Catholic health system, PeaceHealth understands the intake of oral food and fluids under normal circumstances to be ordinary or proportionate means of preserving human life. (See ERD 56.) Exceptions to this may occur when in the judgment of the patient (or their health care representative) the intake of oral food and fluid themselves become excessively burdensome *due to an underlying medical condition*. (See ERDs 57 and 58.)

## PROCEDURE

1. Patients voicing an interest in pursuing VSED should be asked about the reasons for their interest in VSED to determine if modalities offered by PeaceHealth may help, and receive a palliative care consult, a spiritual care consult, a hospice eligibility intake assessment, and/or information from their provider about relevant community resources as appropriate.
2. Patients pursuing VSED independently who are also hospice eligible may be admitted to a PeaceHealth hospice program with the intent of receiving hospice care consistent with PeaceHealth's mission and values.
3. Patients in the hospital voicing an interest in pursuing VSED who are not hospice eligible should receive a palliative care consult, a referral for spiritual care, and/or information from their provider about relevant community resources as appropriate.
4. PeaceHealth caregivers or providers with conscience objections should follow the process outlined in the [Objections of Conscience Policy](#).

## HELP

Further information may be obtained by contacting Mission Services by phone at (360) 729-1295, or the System Director of Hospice and Palliative Care at (360) 729-1681.



# REFERENCES

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services](#).
- Jansen, I.A., & Sulmasy, D.P. (2002). "Sedation, alimentation, hydration, and equivocation: Careful conversation about care at end of life." *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 136, 845-849.

*Formerly known as document number 900.1.485*