

Key messages

Cabrini does not support, facilitate or provide services in relation to voluntary assisted dying.

• **Voluntary assisted dying is not consistent with our values or ethic of care as set out in the Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services in Australia**

• **Designated Cabrini staff are available to provide:**

- Sensitive end of life care discussions with patients or residents
 - Information to patients about end of life care options and services available at Cabrini
 - Assistance for patients to access further supportive care
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• **Palliative services at Cabrini include:**

- In patient and community care
- Medical consulting and nurse liaison
- Symptom management
- Discharge planning and home support

Further information

- Palliative care services at Cabrini visit <https://www.cabrini.com.au/patients-and-families/services/directory/palliative-and-supportive-care> on (03) 9508 5027 and email palliativecare@cabrini.com.au
- If you have further questions, concerns or require further information about voluntary assisted dying and Cabrini, please contact the nurse manager or after hours coordinator
- Specialised support is available for staff and visiting health care professionals involved in the treatment and care of terminal patients. Please contact Pastoral Services or the after hours coordinator through the Cabrini switchboard (03) 9508 1222.
- The Department of Health and Human Services manages all information about Voluntary Assisted Dying in Victoria. Refer to <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/patient-care/end-of-life-care> or call 1300 650 172
- Further information about the Catholic ethic of care as it pertains to people who have a life-limiting illness and/or are nearing the end of their lives, is set out in the *Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services in Australia* (Catholic Health Australia) refer: <https://www.cha.org.au/code-of-ethical-standards>



On 19 June 2019, the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017* (Vic) was enacted, allowing Victorians, in very specific situations, to take a medication prescribed by a medical practitioner to bring about their death. In recognising the significance of this legislation and its potential impact for patients, residents and staff, Cabrini has prepared this document to assist you whilst you work in or for Cabrini.

Who we are

We are a Catholic, not-for-profit provider of aged care, health and health-related services inspired by the missionary vision of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (the Cabrini Sisters).

Our mission is to provide excellence in all of our services and our vision is to provide compassionate care for more people in need.

We believe that every person is worthy of the utmost respect and the best possible healthcare.

Our position

Cabrini welcomes all to our service, regardless of their views and beliefs. We have a commitment to excellence in end of life care, demonstrated through our commitment to palliative care and supportive care. We do not support, facilitate or provide services for the provision of voluntary assisted dying.

Background and context

Excellence in end of life care in the context of Catholic health, aged care and community services means a commitment to the ethic of healing.

Our ethic of healing includes commitments to:

- Heal and never to harm
- Relieve pain and other physical and psycho-social symptoms of illness and suffering
- Withdraw treatments when they are futile, overly burdensome or when a person no longer wants them and gives informed refusal of these treatments
- Never abandon the people in our care

We assist the people in our care die in comfort and with dignity. We do not assist them to end their own lives. We will continue to promote and provide healthcare that is consistent with our Hippocratic commitment and values. Our care is guided by the Code of Ethical Standards for Catholic Health and Aged Care Services in Australia.

Requirements of health care practitioners in relation to end of life care

Cabrini has a voluntary assisted dying policy and protocol which clearly articulates our response to the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017* (Vic) and outlines how Cabrini staff and VMOs can provide a consistent, ethical and compassionate approach to patients, residents or clients when situations arise in relation to this legislation.

It is an accreditation requirement that, while working in our facilities or services, medical practitioners will:

1. Provide effective pain management and respect patients' decisions (or, if they are not competent, those of their medical treatment decision-maker)
2. Forego treatments that are overly burdensome, therapeutically futile, or that are unwanted
3. Acknowledge the importance of any questions about end of life care options in a sensitive and compassionate manner (i.e. all questions should be answered openly and honestly, and plain language, avoiding the use of jargon and medical terminology)
4. Not facilitate or participate in assessments undertaken for the purpose of a patient, resident or client gaining access to, or making use of, interventions allowed under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017* (Vic)
5. Not prescribe or facilitate the provision of the substance permitted under the *Voluntary Assisted Dying Act 2017* (Vic)
6. Not refer a patient or resident to another medical practitioner for the purposes of voluntary assisted dying

In accordance with usual medical practice, medical practitioners will provide medical information to a receiving health service when a person is transferred to another facility of their choice.

End of life care options at Cabrini

At Cabrini we provide palliative and supportive care and chronic disease services throughout all campuses of our health service, in our residential aged care facility and in the community. These services are provided to ensure that quality of life for patients or residents and their families are enhanced wherever the person wishes to receive care.

If patients, residents or clients have questions about voluntary assisted dying, they should be referred to one of our professional staff who will engage in sensitive end of life care discussions including end of life options available at Cabrini. Please contact the nurse manager or after hours coordinator.

