



FERRY COUNTY PUBLIC HOSPITAL DISTRICT #1

dba Ferry County Memorial Hospital (509) 775-3333 fax 775-3866
Republic Medical Clinic (509) 775-3153 fax 775-8929
Curlew Medical Clinic (509) 779-4049 fax 779-4004
Physical Rehab Therapy (509) 775-8400 fax 775-8401
Klondike Hills Assisted Living (509) 775-8228 fax 775-8402

"Count on Us to Care"

SUBJECT: DEATH WITH DIGNITY ACT/INITIATIVE 1000- HOSPITAL AND ITS PROVIDERS WILL NOT PARTICIPATE

POLICY: Resolution 020901

1. Washington law recognizes certain rights and responsibilities of qualified patients and health care providers under the Death with Dignity Act ("Act"). Under Washington law, a health care provider, including Ferry County Memorial Hospital is not required to assist a qualified patient in ending that patient's life.
2. Ferry County Memorial Hospital has chosen to not participate under the Death with Dignity Act. This means that in the performance of their duties, Ferry County Public Hospital District #1, dba Ferry County Memorial Hospital, Republic Medical Clinic and Curlew Medical Clinic, physicians, employees, independent contractors and volunteers shall not assist a patient in ending the patient's life under the Act, on the premises of the hospital or in property owned by the District.
3. No patient will be denied other medical care or treatment because of the patient's participation under the Act. The patient will be treated in the same manner as all other Ferry County Memorial Hospital patients. The appropriate standard of care will be followed.
4. Any patient wishing to receive life-ending medication while a patient at this hospital will be assisted in transfer to another facility of the patient's choice. The transfer will assure continuity of care.
5. All providers at Ferry County Memorial Hospital are expected to respond to any patient's query about life-ending medication with openness and compassion. Ferry County Memorial Hospital believes our providers have an obligation to openly discuss the patient's concerns, unmet needs, feelings, and desires about the dying process. Providers should seek to learn the meaning behind the patient's questions and help the patient understand the range of available options, including but not limited to comfort care, hospice care, and pain control. Ultimately, Ferry County Memorial Hospital's goal is to help patients make informed decisions about end-of-life care.

PROCEDURE:

1. All patients will be provided with educational materials about end-of-life options. These materials will include a statement that Ferry County Memorial Hospital does not participate in the Act.
2. If, as a result of learning of Ferry County Public Hospital District's decision not to participate in the Act, the patient wishes to have care transferred to another hospital of the patient's choice, Ferry County Memorial Hospital staff will assist in making arrangements for the transfer. Of the patient wishes to remain at Ferry County Memorial Hospital, staff will discuss what end of life care will be provided consistent with hospital 'Hospice' policy.

3. If a patient requests a referral to a physician who will fully participate under the Act or expresses the desire to take medication that will result in the patient's death, the provider may choose to provide the patient with a referral, or may instruct the patient that he or she must find a participating provider on his or her own. The relevant medical records will be transferred to the physician taking over the patient's care. The patient's primary clinical care giver (nurse or social worker) will be responsible for:
 - Informing the patient's attending physician as soon as possible, and no longer than one working day, that the patient wishes to take life-ending medications.
 - Ensuring that the medical record is complete and all required documentation is included. A copy of the Resuscitation Status (DNR) order, copies of advance directives, and POLST form are to be included.
 - Communicating with other clinicians involved with the patient to ensure continuity of care.
 - Documenting all communication in the patient's medical record.
4. Nothing in this policy prevents a physician or provider from making an initial determination that the patient has a terminal disease and informing the patient of the medical prognosis.
5. Nothing in this policy prevents a physician or provider from providing information about the "Washington State Death with Dignity Act" to a patient when the patient requests information.
6. Nothing in this policy prohibits a physician who is employed by or who is an independent contractor of Ferry County Memorial Hospital from participating under the Act when not functioning within the scope of his or her capacity as an employee or independent contractor of Ferry County Memorial Hospital.

SANCTIONS:

If a provider participates in the Act beyond what is allowed in the policy, Ferry County Memorial Hospital may impose sanctions on that provider. Ferry County Memorial Hospital shall follow due process procedures provided for in the medical staff by-laws. Sanctions may include:

- Loss of membership;
- Loss of medical staff privileges;
- Termination of District contracts;
- And/or other as may be provided by District policies and/or rules, regulations.

[NOTE: Sanctions must be provided for in the hospital's medical staff by-laws, policies and procedures. Sanctions may be imposed only after due process and other procedural protections that are normally provided for those who practice at the hospital.]

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Ferry County Public Hospital District will provide public notice of this policy in the following ways: posting the policy or information about the hospital's stance on the Death with Dignity Act on the hospital's web page; informing local media; including information in the hospital's community newsletters; including information in hospital materials regarding advance directives; and including information in patient's rights handbooks.

RESOURCES:

Any patient, employee, independent contractor, volunteer or physician may contact the Ethics Committee, Spiritual Care, Social Services, and/or Patient Advocate for assistance.

Laws/Regulations:

Initiative 1000/Washington Death with Dignity Act
Washington State Department of Health Regulations Chapter 246-978 WAC (Currently at CR-102 stage)

Reference Materials:

The Oregon Death with Dignity Act: A Guidebook for Health Care Professional

Ferry County Public Hospital District will not participate in the “Death with Dignity Act”

The recent passage of Initiative 1000, the “Washington State Death with Dignity Act,” has raised many questions for physicians, pharmacists, counselors, and hospitals statewide.

“After careful, thoughtful conversations with our medical staff, Board of Commissioners, and patients, Ferry County Public Hospital District has chosen to not participate under the ‘Washington State Death with Dignity Act.’ This means that Ferry County Memorial Hospital physicians, employees, independent contractors and volunteers shall not assist a patient in ending the patient’s life on District premises. In addition, no provider may participate on the premises of the hospital or in property owned by the District.”

The Death with Dignity Act (“Act”) is clear that no provider, including Ferry County Memorial Hospital, is required to assist a qualified patient in ending his or her own life. Hospitals that do not allow participation are required to provide public notice. Providers may independently contract outside their role with Ferry County Public Hospital District #1 to participate in the Act, off hospital premises.

Ferry County Memorial Hospital will continue to provide compassionate, high quality care to all our patients. Any patient wishing to receive life-ending medication, while a patient at Ferry County Memorial Hospital, will be assisted in transfer to another facility of the patient’s choice. The transfer will assure continuity of care.

“All providers at Ferry County Memorial Hospital will respond to any patient’s query about life-ending medication with openness and compassion. Ferry County Public Hospital District #1 believes our providers have an obligation to openly discuss the patient’s concerns, unmet needs, feelings and desires about the dying process. Providers should seek to learn the meaning behind the patient’s questions and help the patient understand the range of available options including, but not limited to, comfort care, hospice care and pain control. Ultimately, Ferry County Public Hospital District’s goal is to help patients make informed decisions about end-of-life care.”

Ron O’Halloran
Administrator