



## 2007 ASSEMBLY BILL 298

April 30, 2007 – Introduced by Representatives BOYLE, BERCEAU and POCAN, cosponsored by Senators RISSER, JAUCH and CARPENTER. Referred to Committee on Judiciary and Ethics.

1     **AN ACT** *to repeal* 979.01 (1r); *to amend* 979.01 (1) (intro.) and 979.01 (1g); and  
2             *to create* 16.009 (2) (q), 146.82 (2) (a) 8m., chapter 156 and 979.01 (1j) of the  
3             statutes; **relating to:** permitting certain individuals to make written requests  
4             for medication for the purpose of ending their lives, and providing penalties.

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### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill permits an individual who is of sound mind, is not incapacitated, is at least 18 years of age, is a resident of Wisconsin, and has a terminal disease to request voluntarily, in writing, medication from his or her attending physician for the purpose of ending the individual's life in a humane and dignified manner. The bill authorizes the individual's attending physician to issue a prescription for the medication if specified requirements are met. Further, the bill creates a statutory request form for medication and requires that the Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) prepare and provide copies of the request form for distribution to certain facilities, associations, and persons.

The bill establishes the following requirements that must be met before an individual's attending physician may issue a prescription in response to the individual's request for medication:

1. First, the requester must orally ask his or her attending physician for the medication. Then, not fewer than 15 days later, the requester must again request the medication, using a valid request form that is substantially in the form specified in the bill, is in writing, is signed in the presence of three qualified witnesses and dated by the requester, is made voluntarily, and is filed in the requester's patient

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298**

health care record. After the request is filed, the requester must orally ask of his or her attending physician a second time for the medication.

2. The requester's attending physician must determine that the requester meets the requirements for making the request; must inform the requester of his or her diagnosis and prognosis, the probable results of taking the prescribed medication, and the alternatives to doing so; must refer the requester to a consulting physician for review; and must, if the requester may be suffering from a psychiatric or psychological disorder, refer the requester to a psychiatrist or psychologist for review; must, in the requester's patient health care record, document certain information and certify that requirements have been met regarding the request; must ask the requester to inform his or her next of kin about the request; must inform the requester that the request is revocable and offer him or her the opportunity to revoke it; and must report information about the request to DHFS on a form prescribed by DHFS.

3. A consulting physician to whom the requester is referred must medically confirm the attending physician's diagnosis and determination that the requester meets the requirements for making the request. Any psychologist or psychiatrist to whom the requester is referred by the attending or consulting physician must determine and certify in writing that the requester is not suffering from a psychiatric or psychological disorder that causes impaired judgment or from a depression that causes impaired judgment.

The bill specifies that, if the requester is a patient in a health care facility, at least one of the witnesses to the written request for medication must be a patients' advocate designated by the Board on Aging and Long-Term Care. The bill also specifies procedures by which a requester may revoke a request for medication and provides that making a request for medication does not revoke or otherwise modify a living will or health care power of attorney that a requester may have. The bill provides that making a request for medication does not constitute attempted suicide and that taking medication under a fulfilled request does not constitute suicide. The bill establishes penalties for certain actions with regard to the request for medication, but prohibits a health care facility or health care provider from being charged with a crime, being held civilly liable, or being charged with unprofessional conduct for failing to fulfill a request (except that an attending physician who refuses to fulfill a valid request and fails to make a good faith attempt to transfer the requester to another physician who will fulfill the request may be charged with unprofessional conduct), for fulfilling a valid request, or for acting contrary to or failing to act on a revocation of a request unless the health care facility or health care provider has actual knowledge of the revocation.

Because this bill creates a new crime or revises a penalty for an existing crime, the Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties may be requested to prepare a report concerning the proposed penalty and the costs or savings that are likely to result if the bill is enacted.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298**

For further information see the *state and local* fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

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*The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:*

1           **SECTION 1.** 16.009 (2) (q) of the statutes is created to read:

2           16.009 (2) (q) Designate patients' advocates under s. 156.19.

3           **SECTION 2.** 146.82 (2) (a) 8m. of the statutes is created to read:

4           146.82 (2) (a) 8m. To the department under s. 156.07 (8) (g).

5           **SECTION 3.** Chapter 156 of the statutes is created to read:

6   **CHAPTER 156**

7   **DEATH WITH DIGNITY**

8           **156.01 Definitions.** In this chapter:

9           (1) "Attending physician" means a physician who has primary responsibility  
10 for the care of the requester and treatment of the requester's terminal disease.

11           (2) "Comfort care" means palliative care, as defined in s. 50.90 (3), or supportive  
12 care, as defined in s. 50.90 (4).

13           (3) "Consulting physician" means a physician who is qualified by specialty or  
14 experience to make a professional diagnosis and prognosis with respect to the  
15 requester's disease.

16           (4) "Department" means the department of health and family services.

17           (5) "Health care facility" has the meaning given in s. 155.01 (6).

18           (6) "Health care provider" has the meaning given in s. 155.01 (7).

19           (7) "Incapacity" means the inability to receive and evaluate information  
20 effectively or to communicate decisions to such an extent that the individual lacks  
21 the capacity to manage his or her health care decisions.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298****SECTION 3**

1           **(8)** “Informed decision” means a decision by an individual, to request and  
2 obtain medication under a prescription so as to end his or her life in a humane and  
3 dignified manner, that is based on an appreciation of the relevant facts and is made  
4 after having been fully informed by the attending physician of all of the following:

5           (a) The individual’s medical diagnosis.

6           (b) The individual’s prognosis.

7           (c) The potential risks associated with taking the medication to be prescribed.

8           (d) The probable result of taking the medication to be prescribed.

9           (e) The feasible alternatives, including comfort care, care of a hospice, and pain  
10 control.

11           **(9)** “Multipurpose senior center” has the meaning given in s. 155.01 (9).

12           **(10)** “Patient health care records” has the meaning given in s. 146.81 (4).

13           **(11)** “Physician” has the meaning given in s. 448.01 (5).

14           **(12)** “Request for medication” means a request made under s. 156.03 that meets  
15 the requirements of s. 156.05.

16           **(13)** “Requester” means an individual who requests medication under the  
17 requirements of this chapter for the purpose of ending his or her life in a humane and  
18 dignified manner.

19           **(14)** “Residence” has the meaning given in s. 46.27 (1) (d).

20           **(15)** “Responsible person” means the attending physician, a health care  
21 provider serving the requester, an inpatient health care facility in which the  
22 requester is located, or the requester’s spouse, child, parent, brother, sister,  
23 grandparent, or grandchild.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298**

1           **(16)** “Social worker” means a person certified as a social worker, advanced  
2           practice social worker, independent social worker, or independent clinical social  
3           worker under s. 457.08.

4           **(17)** “Terminal disease” means an incurable and irreversible disease that has  
5           been diagnosed by an individual’s attending physician and medically confirmed and  
6           that will, within reasonable medical judgment, cause death within 6 months.

7           **156.03 Authorization to make request.** An individual who is of sound mind,  
8           has attained age 18, has residence in this state, does not have incapacity, and has a  
9           terminal disease may voluntarily make a request for medication for the purpose of  
10          ending his or her life in a humane and dignified manner. An individual for whom an  
11          adjudication of incompetence and appointment of a guardian of the person is in effect  
12          under ch. 54 is presumed not to be of sound mind for purposes of this section.

13          **156.05 Valid request for medication; requirements. (1)** A request for  
14          medication under s. 156.03 is valid only if it is all of the following:

15               (a) In writing.

16               (b) Dated and signed by the requester or, at the express direction and in the  
17          presence of the requester, by an individual who has attained age 18.

18               (c) Signed in the presence of 3 witnesses who meet the requirements of sub. (2).

19               (d) Made voluntarily.

20               (e) Substantially in the form specified in s. 156.15.

21               (f) Filed in the requester’s patient health care record in the custody of the  
22          requester’s attending physician and, if the requester is an inpatient of a health care  
23          facility, in the requester’s patient health care record in the custody of the health care  
24          facility.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298****SECTION 3**

1           **(2)** (a) A witness to the making of a valid request for medication shall be an  
2 individual who has attained age 18. No witness to the making of a valid request for  
3 medication may, at the time of the witnessing, be any of the following:

4           1. Related to the requester by blood, marriage, or adoption.

5           2. An individual who has knowledge that he or she is entitled to or has a claim  
6 on any portion of the requester's estate.

7           3. Directly financially responsible for the requester's health care.

8           4. An individual who is a health care provider who is serving the requester at  
9 the time of the witnessing; an employee, other than a chaplain or a social worker, of  
10 the health care provider; or an employee, other than a chaplain or a social worker,  
11 of a health care facility in which the requester is a patient.

12           (b) If a requester is a resident of a nursing home or community-based  
13 residential facility, at least one of the witnesses to the request shall be a patients'  
14 advocate designated under s. 156.19.

15           **156.07 Attending physician; responsibilities and limitations.** The  
16 attending physician shall do all of the following:

17           **(1)** Determine whether the requester has a terminal disease, does not have  
18 incapacity, and is making a request under s. 156.03 voluntarily.

19           **(2)** Inform the requester of all of the following:

20           (a) The requester's medical diagnosis.

21           (b) The requester's prognosis.

22           (c) The potential risks associated with taking the medication to be prescribed.

23           (d) The probable result of taking the medication to be prescribed.

24           (e) The feasible alternatives to taking the medication to be prescribed,  
25 including comfort care, care of a hospice, and pain control.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298**

1           **(3)** Refer the requester to a consulting physician under the requirements of s.  
2   156.09.

3           **(4)** Refer the requester for review and counseling if the referral is determined  
4   to be appropriate under s. 156.11.

5           **(5)** Ask the requester to notify his or her next of kin with respect to the request  
6   for medication.

7           **(6)** Inform the requester that he or she may revoke the request for medication  
8   at any time; explain the methods of revocation that are specified under s. 156.17 (1);  
9   and offer the requester an opportunity to revoke the request at the time, if any, that  
10   the requester orally asks for medication under s. 156.13 (3) (c).

11          **(7)** Before writing a prescription that fulfills a request for medication, verify  
12   that all of the following have occurred:

13          (a) The requester has fulfilled the requirements of s. 156.13 (3).

14          (b) No fewer than 48 hours have elapsed since the requester made a request  
15   for medication.

16          (c) The requester has made an informed decision.

17          **(8)** Document or file all of the following in the requester's patient health care  
18   record:

19          (a) All occasions which the requester orally asks for medication under s. 156.13  
20   (3) and all requests for medication that are made by the requester.

21          (b) The attending physician's diagnosis of and prognosis for the requester and  
22   determination as to whether the requester is incapacitated, is acting voluntarily, and  
23   has made an informed decision.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298****SECTION 3**

1           (c) The consulting physician's diagnosis of and prognosis for the requester and  
2           determination as to whether the requester is incapacitated, is acting voluntarily, and  
3           has made an informed decision.

4           (d) A certification of the outcome and determinations made during any review  
5           and counseling for which the requester was referred under s. 156.11.

6           (e) A certification as to whether the attending physician offered the requester  
7           an opportunity to revoke the request for medication, as required under sub. (6).

8           (f) Evidence of a revocation, if made, as specified in s. 156.17 (2).

9           (g) A certification as to whether the requirements of this chapter are met and  
10          indicating the steps taken to fulfill the request for medication, including a notation  
11          of any medication that is prescribed. The attending physician shall report the  
12          information under this paragraph to the department on a form prescribed by the  
13          department. Information reported to the department under this paragraph that  
14          could identify the requester, the attending physician, the consulting physician, or the  
15          psychiatrist or psychologist to whom referral was made under s. 156.11, if any, is  
16          confidential and may not be disclosed by the department except under an  
17          investigation of an alleged violation of this chapter. The report of information under  
18          this paragraph is not a violation of any person's responsibility for maintaining the  
19          confidentiality of patient health care records under s. 146.82.

20          **(9)** If the attending physician refuses to fulfill the requester's request for  
21          medication under this chapter, the attending physician shall make a good faith  
22          attempt to transfer the requester's care and treatment to another physician who will  
23          act as the attending physician under this chapter and will fulfill the requester's  
24          request for medication. If a transfer is made, the attending physician to whom the



**ASSEMBLY BILL 298**

1 requester's care and treatment is transferred shall comply with the requirements of  
2 this section.

3 **156.09 Consulting physician.** Before an attending physician may fulfill a  
4 request for medication under this chapter, a consulting physician shall examine the  
5 requester and his or her relevant patient health care records and shall medically  
6 confirm the attending physician's determinations that the requester suffers from a  
7 terminal disease, does not have incapacity, is making a request for medication  
8 voluntarily, and has made an informed decision.

9 **156.11 Referral for review and counseling.** If in the opinion of the  
10 attending physician or the consulting physician a requester may be suffering from  
11 a psychiatric or psychological disorder, including depression, that causes impaired  
12 judgment, the attending physician or consulting physician shall refer the requester  
13 for review and counseling to a physician specializing in psychiatry or a licensed  
14 psychologist, as defined in s. 455.01 (4). No request for medication may be fulfilled  
15 under this chapter unless the physician specializing in psychiatry, or the  
16 psychologist, to whom referral was made, determines and certifies in writing that the  
17 requester is not suffering from a psychiatric or psychological disorder, including  
18 depression, that causes impaired judgment. The certification, if any, shall be filed  
19 in the requester's patient health care record under s. 156.07 (8).

20 **156.13 Requester rights, responsibilities, and limitations.** (1) No  
21 requester may receive a prescription that fulfills a request for medication unless he  
22 or she has made an informed decision.

23 (2) No requester may be required to notify his or her next of kin regarding his  
24 or her request for medication, and no request for medication may be denied because  
25 the requester has failed to notify his or her next of kin.

## ASSEMBLY BILL 298

## SECTION 3

1           **(3)** In order to receive a prescription that fulfills a request for medication, a  
2 requester shall do all of the following:

3           (a) Orally ask his or her attending physician for medication for the purpose of  
4 ending his or her life.

5           (b) No fewer than 15 days after asking for medication under par. (a), make a  
6 request for medication.

7           (c) After making a request for medication under par. (b), orally ask his or her  
8 attending physician a 2nd time for medication for the purpose of ending his or her  
9 life.

10           **156.15 Request for medication; form.** The department shall prepare and  
11 provide copies of a request for medication form and accompanying information for  
12 distribution in quantities to health care providers, hospitals, nursing homes,  
13 multipurpose senior centers, county clerks, and local bar associations and  
14 individually to private persons. The department shall include, in information  
15 accompanying the copy of the request for medication form, at least the statutory  
16 definitions of terms used in the request for medication form, statutory restrictions  
17 on who may be witnesses to a valid request for medication, and a statement  
18 explaining that valid witnesses acting in good faith are statutorily immune from civil  
19 or criminal liability. The request for medication form distributed by the department  
20 shall be in the following form:

21                                       REQUEST FOR MEDICATION

22                                       TO END MY LIFE IN A HUMANE

23                                       AND DIGNIFIED MANNER

24           I, ....., am an adult of sound mind, do not have incapacity, and am a resident of  
25 Wisconsin.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298**

1 I am suffering from ....., which my attending physician has determined is a  
2 terminal disease and which has been medically confirmed by a consulting physician.

3 I have been fully informed of my diagnosis, prognosis, the nature of medication  
4 to be prescribed and potential associated risks, the expected result, and the feasible  
5 alternatives, including comfort care, hospice care, and pain control.

6 I request that my attending physician prescribe medication that will end my life  
7 in a humane and dignified manner.

8 INITIAL ONE OF THE FOLLOWING 3 STATEMENTS:

9 .... I have informed my family members of my decision and taken their opinions  
10 into consideration.

11 .... I have decided not to inform my family of my decision.

12 .... I have no family to inform of my decision.

13 I understand that I have the right to revoke this request at any time.

14 I understand the full import of this request and I expect to die when I take the  
15 medication to be prescribed.

16 I make this request voluntarily and without reservation, and I accept full moral  
17 responsibility for my actions.

18 Signed: ....

19 Dated: ....

20 STATEMENT AND SIGNATURES

21 OF WITNESSES

22 I know the requester personally or I have received proof of his or her identity  
23 and I believe him or her to be of sound mind and at least 18 years of age. I believe  
24 that the requester makes this request voluntarily. I am at least 18 years of age, am  
25 not related to the requester by blood, marriage, or adoption, and am not directly

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298****SECTION 3**

1 financially responsible for the requester's health care. I am not a health care  
2 provider who is serving the requester at this time; an employee of the health care  
3 provider, other than a chaplain or a social worker; or an employee, other than a  
4 chaplain or a social worker, of a health care facility in which the requester is a  
5 patient. To the best of my knowledge, I am not entitled to and do not have a claim  
6 on the requester's estate.

7 Witness No. 1:

8 (print) Name: ....

9 Address: ....

10 Signature: ....

11 Witness No. 2:

12 (print) Name: ....

13 Address: ....

14 Signature: ....

15 Witness No. 3:

16 (print) Name: ....

17 Address: ....

18 Signature: ....

19 If the requester is a patient in a health care facility, at least one of the above  
20 witnesses must be a patients' advocate designated by the board on aging and  
21 long-term care. A patients' advocate who is a witness should print "patients'  
22 advocate" after the printing of his or her name above.

23 **156.17 Revocation of request for medication. (1)** A requester may revoke  
24 his or her request for medication at any time by doing any of the following:

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298**

1           (a) Canceling, defacing, obliterating, burning, tearing, or otherwise destroying  
2 the request for medication or directing another in the presence of the requester to  
3 destroy, in the same manner, the request for medication.

4           (b) Executing a statement, in writing, that is signed and dated by the requester,  
5 expressing the requester's intent to revoke the request for medication.

6           (c) Orally expressing the requester's intent to revoke the request for  
7 medication, in the presence of 2 witnesses.

8           (d) Making a subsequent request for medication.

9           **(2)** The requester's health care provider shall, upon notification of revocation  
10 of the requester's request for medication, record in the requester's medical record the  
11 time, date, and place of the revocation and the time, date, and place, if different, of  
12 the notification to the health care provider of the revocation.

13           **156.19 Designation of patients' advocates.** The board on aging and  
14 long-term care shall designate staff of the long-term care ombudsman program as  
15 patients' advocates. A person so designated shall serve as a witness to a request for  
16 medication of a requester who is a patient or resident of a nursing home or  
17 community-based residential facility, as required under s. 156.05 (2) (b), and shall  
18 speak on behalf of the requester to ensure that his or her needs or wants are  
19 communicated to and addressed by his or her attending physician.

20           **156.21 Duties and immunities. (1)** No health care facility or health care  
21 provider may be charged with a crime, held civilly liable, or charged with  
22 unprofessional conduct for any of the following:

23           (a) Failing to fulfill a request for medication, except that failure of an attending  
24 physician to fulfill a request for medication constitutes unprofessional conduct if the  
25 attending physician refuses or fails to make a good faith attempt to transfer the

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298****SECTION 3**

1 requester's care and treatment to another physician who will act as attending  
2 physician under this chapter and fulfill the request for medication.

3 (b) In the absence of actual knowledge of a revocation, fulfilling a request for  
4 medication that is in compliance with this chapter.

5 (c) Acting contrary to or failing to act on a revocation of a request for medication,  
6 unless the health care facility or health care provider has actual knowledge of the  
7 revocation.

8 **(2)** In the absence of actual notice to the contrary, a health care facility or a  
9 health care provider, other than a physician acting as the requester's attending  
10 physician under this chapter, may presume that a requester was authorized to make  
11 his or her request for medication under the requirements of this chapter and that the  
12 request for medication is valid.

13 **(3)** (a) No person who acts in good faith as a witness to a request for medication  
14 under this chapter may be held civilly or criminally liable for a death that results  
15 from taking medication under a fulfilled request for medication under this chapter.

16 (b) Paragraph (a) does not apply to a person who acts as a witness in violation  
17 of s. 156.05 (2) (a).

18 **156.23 General provisions.** **(1)** (a) The making of a request for medication  
19 under this chapter does not, for any purpose, constitute attempted suicide. Taking  
20 medication under a fulfilled request for medication under this chapter does not, for  
21 any purpose, constitute suicide.

22 (b) Paragraph (a) does not prohibit an insurer from making a determination  
23 that a requester has attempted suicide or committed suicide if the requester has so  
24 acted, apart from the request for medication.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298**

1           (2) The making of a request for medication under this chapter does not revoke  
2           or otherwise modify a power of attorney for health care or living will that the  
3           requester may have executed.

4           (3) No individual may be required to make a request for medication as a  
5           condition for receipt of health care or admission to a health care facility. The making  
6           of a request for medication is not a bar to the receipt of health care or the admission  
7           to a health care facility.

8           (4) A request for medication that has not been revoked and that is in its original  
9           form or is a legible photocopy or electronic facsimile copy is presumed to be valid.

10          (5) Nothing in this chapter may be construed to condone, authorize, approve,  
11          or permit any affirmative or deliberate act to end life other than through taking  
12          medication that is prescribed under a request for medication as provided in this  
13          chapter.

14          **156.25 Record review.** The department shall annually examine a sampling  
15          of patient health care records of requesters for whom medication was prescribed in  
16          fulfillment of a request for medication and about whom the department has received  
17          information under s. 156.07 (8) (g).

18          **156.27 Penalties. (1)** Any person who willfully conceals, cancels, defaces,  
19          obliterates, or damages the request for medication of another without the requester's  
20          consent may be fined not more than \$500 or imprisoned for not more than 30 days  
21          or both.

22          (2) Any person who, with the intent to cause a requester to take medication that  
23          is prescribed under a request for medication contrary to the wishes of the requester,  
24          illegally falsifies or forges the request for medication of another or conceals a

**ASSEMBLY BILL 298****SECTION 3**

1 revocation under s. 156.17 (1) (a), (b), or (c) shall be fined not more than \$10,000 or  
2 imprisoned for not more than 10 years or both.

3 (3) Any responsible person who, with the intent to cause a requester to take  
4 medication that is prescribed under a request for medication contrary to the wishes  
5 of the requester, conceals personal knowledge of a revocation under s. 156.17 shall  
6 be fined not more than \$10,000 or, except for a health care facility, imprisoned for not  
7 more than 10 years or both.

8 **SECTION 4.** 979.01 (1) (intro.) of the statutes is amended to read:

9 979.01 (1) (intro.) All Except as provided in sub. (1j), all physicians, authorities  
10 of hospitals, sanatoriums, public and private institutions, convalescent homes,  
11 authorities of any institution of a like nature, and other persons having knowledge  
12 of the death of any person who has died under any of the following circumstances,  
13 shall immediately report the death to the sheriff, ~~police chief, or~~ and medical  
14 examiner or coroner of the county and to the police chief of any community where the  
15 death took place:

16 **SECTION 5.** 979.01 (1g) of the statutes is amended to read:

17 979.01 (1g) A sheriff or police chief shall, immediately upon notification of a  
18 death under sub. (1), ~~notify the coroner or the medical examiner, and the coroner or~~  
19 ~~medical examiner of the county where death took place,~~ if the crime, injury, or event  
20 occurred in another county, ~~shall immediately~~ report the death to the coroner or  
21 medical examiner of that county.

22 **SECTION 6.** 979.01 (1j) of the statutes is created to read:

23 979.01 (1j) Subsection (1) does not apply to a death that results from taking  
24 medication under a fulfilled request for medication that meets the requirements of  
25 ch. 156.



