

Madrone Hospice Inc.
Administrative Policies and Operating Procedures

Section: Patient Care Services/ Ethics Committee

Policy Title: California's End of Life Option Act-*Organization Wide*

Section: Medical Aid in Dying

PURPOSE

The California's End of Life Option Act (CEOLOA) allows mentally capable, terminally ill adults (18 years or older) seeking to shorten their dying process to request life-ending doses of medication from medical and osteopathic physicians. Madrone Hospice Inc (MHI) reaffirms a basic element of the hospice philosophy states: because dying is a natural process, hospice neither seeks to hasten nor postpone death. MHI also reaffirms the philosophy that hospice does not abandon dying patients and their families. MHI acknowledges that there may be hospice patients who will wish to avail themselves of their legal right under the CEOLOA and MHI will not abandon these patients or their families. MHI recognizes this is a matter between the patient and his or her physician.

POLICY

Patients who inquire about CEOLOA will be asked to contact their attending physician. MHI will continue to provide standard hospice services to patients regardless of their stated interest or intent in pursuing CEOLOA.

Neither staff nor patient care volunteers will assist or participate in the CEOLOA. MHI will not provide, deliver, administer, or assist with medication intended for CEOLOA. MHI personnel will not be present at place of residence during ingestion or in the room at the Madrone House. This is the families private time.

Staff and volunteers who are morally or ethically opposed to CEOLOA will have the option of transferring care responsibility to other staff.

PROCEDURE

As is customary, MHI staff will explore and evaluate patients' statements related to end of life if they arise during routine visits.

If patient or family members make an inquiry about CEOLOA, MHI will respond to inquiries or request for information and refer them to their attending physician. MHI will not act as an agent in initiating CEOLOA.

Staff or volunteers who are aware that a patient is considering CEOLOA will notify the executive director, the patient care coordinator, and the assigned social worker. Patients who verbalize this intent will be told this information will be shared with the hospice team and they will be encouraged to discuss it with their family.

Staff and volunteers working with a patient/family who has verbalized an interest in CEOLOA will document all discussions and interventions with patient, family, other team members and any other person who may be involved with the patient. This documentation will become part of the patient's permanent medical record.

A team conference will be convened to include staff, volunteers working with the patient/family, as well as, members of the interdisciplinary group and attending physician. The purpose of this meeting will be to examine the patient's reasons for considering CEOLOA and to discuss how to address these issues. Staff having contact with such patients will consult with and be supported by the assigned social worker, patient care coordinator and/or the executive director on an ongoing basis.

If the patient chooses to pursue CEOLOA, MHI staff will work with Patient/family to address and attempt to resolve any problems or issues that may be contributing to their decision. The Pt/family will be informed of MHI's role and that we will continue to provide our customary hospice services to meet physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

If the patient asks their physician for prescription for medication to end one's life, the patient and family will receive ongoing care. There will be continued exploration and evaluation of the problems and issues that led to the request for the lethal dose of medication with the goal that the patient's quality of life can be maintained or improved.

As customary, bereavement support will be available to all families.

MHI ethics committee will meet annually to review cases involving CEOLOA and to review our policies and procedures regarding CEOLOA. The committee will also meet at the request of staff to discuss concerns about CEOLOA, to review an individual's case or to review our policy and procedures.

Quarterly staff education regarding CEOLOA for continuity of care, staffing changes and correction or changes in current policies and procedures of CEOLOA.