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## Early Learning & Human Services Committee

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### HB 1876

**Brief Description:** Concerning the requirements for accessing the Washington death with dignity act.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Peterson, Rude, Doglio, Parshley, Simmons, Ormsby, Ramel, Hill, Macri and Pollet.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Exempts a qualified patient from the seven-day waiting period between the first and second request for life ending medication in certain circumstances.
- Specifies that the prohibition against an attending or consulting qualifying medical provider having a direct supervisory relationship with the other provider only applies if one of the providers is a physician assistant.

**Hearing Date:** 2/14/25

**Staff:** Omeara Harrington (786-7136).

#### Background:

The Death with Dignity Act (Act) allows a qualified patient with a terminal illness with six months or less to live to request medication that the patient may self-administer to end his or her life. A qualified patient must meet the following requirements:

- the patient must be a competent adult and a resident of Washington;
- the attending qualified medical provider and a consulting qualified medical provider must

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determine that the patient suffers from a terminal disease and that the patient has voluntarily expressed the wish to die;

- the patient must make a request for medication on a form provided in statute; and
- the form must be signed and dated by the patient and at least two witnesses who attest to their belief that the patient is competent, acting voluntarily, and not being coerced to sign the request.

The health care providers authorized to serve as qualified medical providers are physicians, osteopathic physicians, physician assistants, and advanced registered nurse practitioners. The patient's attending qualified medical provider is responsible for determining that the patient has a terminal condition, is competent, is making an informed decision, and is voluntarily making the request. These determinations must be confirmed by a consulting qualified medical provider.

Patients may select the attending and consulting qualified medical providers of their choosing, as long as a physician or osteopathic physician serves in one of the roles. Neither the attending or consulting qualified medical provider chosen by the patient may have a direct supervisory relationship with the other.

Under the Act, to receive the medication to end his or her life, the patient must make an oral request and a written request to their attending qualified medical provider, followed by a subsequent second oral request to the attending qualified medical provider. A waiting period of seven days is required between the time of the first oral request and the second request. A patient may rescind their request at any time.

### **Summary of Bill:**

A qualified patient is exempt from the seven-day waiting period between the first and second request for life ending medication if the attending qualified medical provider determines that:

- the patient is not expected to live for seven days;
- the patient is not expected to retain the ability to self-administer the medication for seven days; or
- the patient is experiencing irremediable pain or suffering, defined as pain or other physical symptoms related to the patient's terminal disease that cannot be reasonably managed or significantly alleviated by available treatment.

The prohibition against an attending or consulting qualified medical provider having a direct supervisory relationship with the other qualified medical provider only applies if one of the qualified medical providers is a physician assistant.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.