And finally...

- Your doctor will write a prescription and provide you with instructions on where to have it filled.
- There are several medication options that your doctor should discuss with you. Your physician will provide complete instructions when the prescription is written.
- If your doctor has questions about the medications or protocol, she or he can check our website under Resources for Doctors.
- If your doctor does not wish to assist you with the Act 39 process, you may ask for a referral to another doctor.

Stories from Vermont

“Our dad was determined to live to the end in a purposeful and meaningful way and that’s what he did. Just knowing that he could choose the time to slip away peacefully gave him the strength for what he said were some of the deepest conversations of his life.”

- Nancy and Betsy

“Maggie felt empowered. She felt relieved and calmer and glad that she had the option.”

- Katy

“She lived her life purposefully and specifically and had the same intention and approach regarding her end-of-life care... She knew now that she had a safety net; a safeguard against a painful death... Within sixteen minutes, she passed, peacefully and without pain or struggle. It was just the death she’d hoped for.”

- Meg

For more information

Email: info@PatientChoices.org
Phone: 802-448-0542

Please check our website first for answers to your questions.

For resources on Act 39, please see www.patientchoices.org
If your doctor has informed you that you have a terminal illness with a life expectancy of six months or less, you have certain decisions about choices available to you.

**Advance Directive**

- If you haven’t already done so, you should execute an Advance Directive, a document that specifies what care you do or do not want to receive if you are not capable of communicating your wishes. Forms are available on the Vermont Department of Health website.

- The Advance Directive is activated only if you become incapable of making your own medical decisions. Then the person you designated to be your Health Care Agent has the responsibility to ensure that your wishes, as expressed in your Advance Directive, are followed.

- You should discuss with your doctor when or whether to enroll in a hospice program, which provides quality end-of-life care and support for patients and families.

- It is never too soon to speak with your doctor about your end-of-life care. For guidance, see the link *How to Talk to Your Doctor* at www.PatientChoices.org.

**Your Rights**

As long as you are capable of making your own health care decisions, you are in charge and have certain rights.

- You may choose to have every possible means or interventions to keep you alive.
- You may specify which medical procedures may be used.
- You may choose to limit or decline medical procedures.
- You may specify conditions under which you do not want to be resuscitated by filling out and having your doctor sign a DNR/COLST form, available on the Vermont Department of Health website.
- You may decide to voluntarily stop eating and drinking (VSED) in order to hasten death.
- You may ask to receive medication to alleviate pain, anxiety and other symptoms.
- You may choose to use Act 39 – Vermont’s Death with Dignity law – that gives you the option to receive a prescription to hasten death when you so choose. We suggest allowing one to two months for completing the process.

**To use Act 39 you must:**

1. Make an oral request to your physician,
2. Write your request, and
3. Make a second oral request after a 15-day waiting period.

Both your own and a second consulting physician must determine that you:

a. Have a terminal illness with 6 months or fewer to live,

b. Are competent to make your own health care decisions,

c. Are under no external pressure to hasten death,

d. Are a Vermont resident, and

e. Can self-administer the medication.

The forms to be completed are available on the website of the Vermont Health Department.