

FACTSHEET 15: Saves' Primary Objective

Our primary objective is a change to the law in South Australia so that in appropriate circumstances, and with defined safeguards, death may be brought about as an option of last resort in medical practice. These circumstances must include the free and informed request of the patient.

There would be no obligation on any doctor to comply with the request contrary to medical judgement or conscience. Should there be objections of conscience; the patient should be offered referral to another doctor. No institution or person would be required to participate against conscience.

Proposed Conditions:

If the patient is competent:

- The patient's request is freely made, preferably over a period, and witnessed;
- The patient is hopelessly ill;
- No treatment acceptable to the patient is available which would provide relief from suffering which the patient finds intolerable;
- All treatment options and their likely outcomes are explained to the patient.

If the patient is no longer competent:

- There is no reasonable prospect of the patient regaining competence;
- The patient, while competent, had:
 - completed a legally valid advance directive and/or
 - appointed a trustee to make treatment decisions authorising death to be brought about under medical supervision in the event of permanent loss of competence.

Additional Safeguards:

- A second independent medical practitioner confirms the medical assessment;
- There is discussion, subject to the patient's wishes, with those having an interest in the patient's welfare and the opportunity for the patient, if competent, to seek counselling;
- Death is brought about under the personal supervision of a medical practitioner exercising due care and following professional guidelines;
- The request may be revoked by the patient at any time, even if no longer competent;
- Proper records are kept and a report made to an appropriate monitoring authority.