

How We Work Alongside the End of Life Choice Act

At Arohanui Hospice, our focus is helping patients/whānau live their remaining time with comfort, dignity, and meaning. For some, that journey may include considering assisted dying under the End of Life Choice Act. Here's what you need to know about how we support patients in this context.

What the Law Says

Since November 2021, the End of Life Choice Act allows eligible New Zealanders with a terminal illness to request medical assistance to end their life. This is a personal decision, and we respect that. (See eligibility criteria below).

What We Do Offer

Even though we don't provide assisted dying, we remain committed to supporting patients who wish to explore this option:

- Information and connection: We can link patients to an approved provider for advice and eligibility assessment. We can release information to the assisted dying service with patient consent.
- Privacy and respect: Approved providers may visit patients in our inpatient unit for confidential discussions.
- Ongoing care: Patients remain under hospice care throughout, even if they choose assisted dying. They can change their mind at any time.

Our Position

Assisted dying falls outside the scope of palliative care - we are not an approved assisted dying provider.

If Assisted Dying Is Chosen

Patients who decide to proceed with assisted dying will continue to receive our care and support right up until the end. Our commitment to comfort, dignity, and compassion does not change, regardless of the choices a patient makes. That care includes provision of bereavement support for family and whānau.

Starting the Conversation

Legally, a health practitioner cannot discuss assisted dying with a patient, unless the patient personally raises it first.

To speak with an approved provider, contact SCENZ (Support and Consultation for End of Life in New Zealand) on 0800 223 852 or AssistedDying@health.govt.nz

Eligibility at a Glance

Under the Act, a person must:

- Be 18 or older
- Be a NZ citizen or permanent resident
- Have a terminal illness likely to end life within six months
- Be in irreversible physical decline
- Experience unbearable suffering that cannot be relieved in a way they find tolerable
- Be able to make an informed decision (understand, remember, weigh up, and communicate)

The law does not require patients to share their decision with family or friends.