



Dear Friend --

Starting the conversation about VAD

Talking to your doctor

Queensland's VAD law will become a reality on 1 January 2023.

The QLD Health Implementation Unit is encouraging health practitioners - doctors and nurses – to register their interest, check their eligibility and sign up for online training. Getting enough trained practitioners will be “critical to success”, says Prof. Keith McNeil, the Taskforce Chair.

So now is the perfect time to start talking to your GP, specialist or nurse practitioner about VAD.

Busy doctors are more likely to explore what's involved in being a VAD provider if they're already aware of the new law, and have patients who may request it.

The VAD process requires two doctors to assess the patient's request for VAD. But it's the doctor or nurse that the patient first approaches who's the key, the “co-ordinating practitioner”, who's involved every step of the way. This will probably be a GP who knows the patient and their history well. For patients who live in a remote area, it may well be a nurse practitioner.

It's fine to raise the topic of end of life care with your doctor. The Queensland VAD Act allows your GP to discuss VAD with you, but they must also discuss all other possible treatments with you at the same time. Book a “long consult” appointment if you can, so no-one feels rushed.

It helps to work out what really matters to you, while you have time and energy to think clearly. This list is unique to you! Maybe what matters is “keeping my dignity”, “dying at home, with my family beside me”, “choosing the time and place”, as well as your cultural or religious traditions, or that one last walk by the sea.

Begin the conversation with your doctor very gently... “I’ve been thinking about the care I’d want at the end of my life...”; “I’m ready to explore what palliative care or VAD would involve, for someone with my prognosis”; “I really value how you’ve looked after me. If I’m requesting VAD, I hope you’ll agree to be involved.”

Talking to your doctor about VAD and end-of-life care will be a continuing conversation, not just one consult. We know that our doctors and nurses have many demands. We hope they’ll feel encouraged to become part of the VAD service and to keep the conversation going.

Your feedback and thoughts are welcome – you can reply to this email or send a message to dwdq.sheila@gmail.com

Great free resources & ideas about discussion starters:

www.advancecareplanning.org.au

www.palliativecare.org.au

Dying with Dignity Queensland

<http://www.dwdq.org.au/>