



26 July 2021

Ministry of Health
PO Box 5013
Wellington 6140
email: EOLC@health.govt.nz

Re: Consultation on details around the funding of assisted dying services

The New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists (NZSA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Ministry of Health's consultation around the funding of assisted dying services, which will be captured in a section 88 Notice. We strongly support the Ministry's aim to allow funding to be accessed on an equal basis by practitioners working in a range of settings including public and private healthcare, in primary care and other settings.

About the NZSA

The NZSA is a professional medical education society, which represents over 700 medical anaesthetists in New Zealand. Our members include specialist anaesthetists in public and private practice, and trainee anaesthetists. We facilitate and promote education and research into anaesthesia and advocate for the specialty and the safety of patients. As an advocacy organisation, we develop submissions on government policy and legislation, work collaboratively with key stakeholders, and foster networks of anaesthetists nationwide. The NZSA, established in 1948, also has strong global connections, and is a Member Society of the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA).

Comments

We have answered some of the questions from the MOH form as below.

Question 1: In your organisation's view, is the function of the notice and service description and the process for changing them clear? Yes.

Question 1: In your organisation's view, are the eligibility and entitlement requirements sufficiently clear in the notice? Yes.

Question 2: Are there any eligibility or entitlement requirements to receive funding that your organisation considers should be added/removed or changed?

No. We are assuming that all the paperwork will be undertaken by the practitioner, rather than via secretarial support.

Module One compensates the attending medical practitioner, or a replacement attending medical practitioner for the tasks performed in supporting the person to complete an application to start the assessment process for assisted dying, and giving the first opinion about whether the person is eligible for assisted dying or not.

Question 3: In your organisation's view, are the actions/activities required from those providing module one clear?

Yes.

Question 4: Is there anything your organisation considers should be added/removed or clarified?

Clarity is required on whether it is time based or a fixed fee.

Module Two compensates the independent medical practitioner for the tasks performed to provide the second opinion of the person's eligibility to access assisted dying.

Question 5: In your organisation's view, are the actions/activities required from those providing module two clear? Yes.

Question 6: Is there anything your organisation considers should be added/removed or clarified? No.

Module Three compensates a psychiatrist for completing the tasks carried out by them under the Act to determine a person's competence to seek assisted dying (if necessary).

Question 7: In your organisation's view, are the actions/activities required from those providing module three clear? Yes.

Question 8: Is there anything your organisation considers should be added/removed or clarified? No.

Module Four compensates the attending medical practitioner for the time required to undertake tasks associated with telling the person the result of their application for assisted dying – whether they are eligible or not, and supporting someone who is eligible to determine the date and time that assisted dying will take place, and the method.

Question 9: In your organisation's view, are the actions/activities required from those providing module four clear? Yes.

Question 10: Is there anything your organisation considers should be added/removed or clarified? No.

Module Five compensates the attending medical practitioner or the attending nurse practitioner for the time to prepare, administer the medication and complete the assisted death, including post-death processes.

Question 11: In your organisation's view, are the actions/activities required from those providing module five clear? Yes.

Question 12: Is there anything your organisation considers should be added/removed or clarified? No.

Other module questions and feedback

Question 13: Does your organisation have any other questions or comments about how the modules would work, or anything you would like to see included?

We seek clarity on how it would work if one practitioner started a module, but for some reason had to hand it over to someone else.

Question 14: How should payments for travel costs be provided?

By reimbursing for the actual costs of practitioners' travel by invoicing, booking on behalf, or similar.

Question 15: In your organisation's view, is the process for practitioners to be paid clear? If not, what could be done to improve this?

It is not clear whether it is a fixed fee or time based. These are quite different, so clarity is required. We suggest time based is more appropriate.

The NZSA is happy to discuss our comments and to answer any questions in relation to this consultation. I can be contacted at president@anaesthesia.nz

Yours sincerely



Sheila Hart
President