

ASSISTANCE TO SUICIDE (EXCERPT)
Act 270 of 1992

752.1024 Development and submission of recommendations to legislature; effective date of section.

Sec. 4. (1) Within 15 months after the effective date of this act, the commission shall develop and submit to the legislature recommendations as to legislation concerning the voluntary self-termination of life. In developing these recommendations, the commission shall consider each of the following:

(a) Current data concerning voluntary self-termination, including each of the following:

(i) The current self-termination rate in the state, compared with historical levels.

(ii) The causes of voluntary self-termination, and in particular each of the following:

(A) The role of alcohol and other drugs.

(B) The role of age, disease, and disability.

(iii) Past and current Michigan law concerning voluntary self-termination, including the status of persons who assist a patient's self-termination, and in particular the effect of any relevant law enacted during the 86th Legislature.

(iv) The laws of other states concerning voluntary self-termination, and in particular the effect of those laws on the rate of self-termination.

(b) The proper aims of legislation affecting voluntary self-termination, including each of the following:

(i) The existence of a societal consensus in the state on the morality of the voluntary self-termination of life, including the morality of other persons assisting a patient's self-termination.

(ii) The significance of each of the following:

(A) The attitudes of a patient's family regarding his or her voluntary self-termination.

(B) The cause of a patient's act of self-termination, including apprehension or existence of physical pain, disease, or disability.

(iii) Whether to differentiate among the following causes of voluntary self-termination:

(A) Physical conditions, as distinguished from psychological conditions.

(B) Physical conditions that will inevitably cause death, as distinguished from physical conditions with which a patient may survive indefinitely.

(C) Withdrawing or withholding medical treatment, as distinguished from administering medication, if both are in furtherance of a process of voluntary self-termination.

(iv) With respect to how the law should treat a person who assists a patient's voluntary self-termination, whether to differentiate based on the following:

(A) The nature of the assistance, including inaction; noncausal facilitation; information transmission; encouragement; providing the physical means of self-termination; active participation without immediate risk to the person assisting; and active participation that incurs immediate risk to the person assisting, such as suicide pacts.

(B) The motive of the person assisting, including compassion, fear for his or her own safety, and fear for the safety of the patient.

(C) The patient's awareness of his or her true condition, including the possibility of mistake or deception.

(v) The relevance of each of the following:

(A) The legal status of suicide.

(B) The legal status of living wills.

(C) The right to execute a durable power of attorney for health care, as provided in section 496 of the revised probate code, Act No. 642 of the Public Acts of 1978, being section 700.496 of the Michigan Compiled Laws.

(D) The common-law right of a competent adult to refuse medical care or treatment.

(E) Constitutional rights of free speech, free exercise of religion, and privacy, and constitutional prohibitions on the establishment of religion.

(c) The most efficient method of preventing voluntary self-terminations, to the extent prevention is a proper aim of legislation. In particular, the commission shall consider each of the following:

(i) The costs of various methods of preventing voluntary self-terminations, including the use of any of the following:

(A) Public health measures, such as crisis therapy and suicide counseling services.

(B) Tort law.

(C) Criminal law, including the desirability of criminalizing suicide or attempted suicide.

(D) Civil sanctions, including the denial of inheritance and requirements of community service and mandatory counseling.

(ii) The likely effect of any of the methods listed in subparagraph (i) on the self-termination rate, and in particular the probability that a particular method might cause the self-termination rate to increase.

(iii) The impact of any of the methods listed in subparagraph (i) on the practice of medicine and the availability of health care in the state.

(iv) Whether current state law is adequate to address the question of voluntary self-termination in the state.

(d) Appropriate guidelines and safeguards regarding voluntary self-terminations the law should allow, including the advisability of allowing, in limited cases, the administering of medication in furtherance of a process of voluntary self-termination.

(e) Any other factors the commission considers necessary in developing recommendations for legislation concerning the voluntary self-termination of life.

(2) This section shall take effect February 25, 1993.

History: 1992, Act 270, Eff. Mar. 31, 1993;—Am. 1993, Act 3, Imd. Eff. Feb. 25, 1993.