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Palliative Care Information Act Expanded **Law Will Now Cover Facilities**

Beginning September 27, 2011, New York's Palliative Care Information Act will apply to both medical professionals as well as facilities, including hospitals, nursing homes, and home care agencies.

Under the [Palliative Care Information Act](#), which was enacted last year and took effect in February, doctors and nurses must provide information and counseling on palliative care and end-of-life options to their terminally-ill patients (or whoever has the authority to make decisions on such patients' behalf). On its [website](#), the Department of Health defines a terminally-ill patient as one who has "an illness or condition which can reasonably be expected to cause death within six months, whether or not treatment is provided." Advice should include a patient's options, along with the associated benefits and risks for each, and should be tailored to any known wishes the patient has expressed about his/her end-of-life care. Attending doctors or nurses who do not want to provide palliative care counseling can transfer patients to a colleague if the latter is willing to comply with the law's requirements.

Facilities covered by the law's expansion, a part of the 2011-12 State budget enacted at the end of March, will need to create procedures for ensuring that terminally-ill patients can receive the palliative care advice and counseling to which they are entitled. However, the law will also require them to provide patients with direct access or referrals to any appropriate services for their respective cases.

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