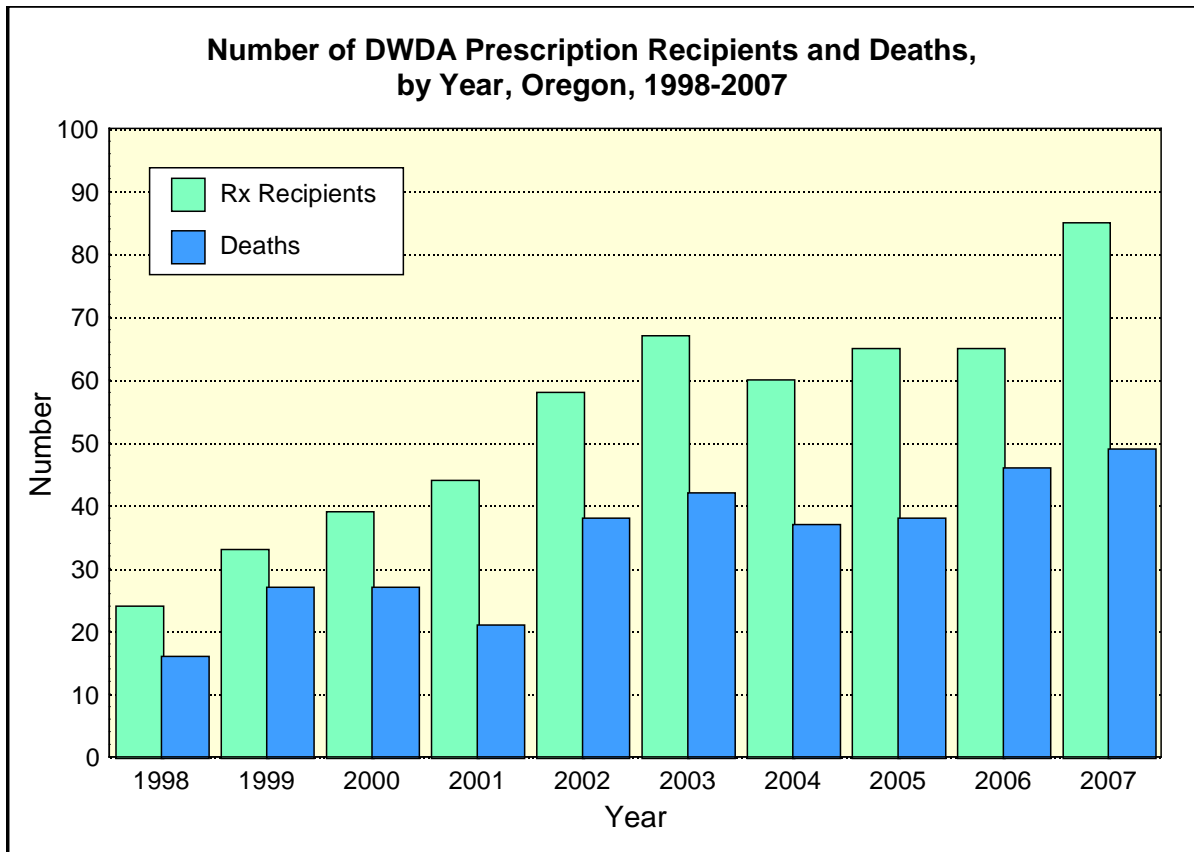


Summary of Oregon's Death with Dignity Act - 2007

Oregon's Death with Dignity Act (DWDA) allows terminally ill adult residents to obtain and use prescriptions from their physicians for self-administered, lethal doses of medications. The Oregon Department of Human Services is required by the Act to collect information on compliance and to issue an annual report. The key findings from 2007 are listed below. For more detail, please view the tables on our web site: <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pas/index.shtml>.



- During 2007, 85 prescriptions for lethal medications were written under the provisions of the DWDA compared to 65 during 2006 (Figure). Of these, 46 patients took the medications, 26 died of their underlying disease, and 13 were alive at the end of 2007. In addition, three patients with earlier prescriptions died from taking the medications, resulting in a total of 49 DWDA deaths during 2007. This corresponds to an estimated 15.6 DWDA deaths per 10,000 total deaths.

- Forty-five physicians wrote the 85 prescriptions (range 1-10).
- Since the DWDA was passed in 1997, 341 patients have died under the terms of the law.
- As in prior years, most participants were between 55 and 84 years of age (80%) white (98%), well educated (69% had some college), and had terminal cancer (86%). Patients who died in 2007 were younger (median age 65 years) than in previous years (median age 70 years).
- During 2007, more patients resided in the Portland Metropolitan area (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties) (55%) compared to prior years (39%).
- All patients had some form of health insurance: 65% had private insurance, and 35% had Medicare or Medicaid.
- As in previous years, the most frequently mentioned end-of-life concerns were: loss of autonomy (100%), decreasing ability to participate in activities that made life enjoyable (86%), and loss of dignity (86%). During 2007, more participants were concerned about inadequate pain control (33%) than in previous years (26%).
- Most patients died at home (90%) and were enrolled in hospice care (88%).
- Complications were reported in three patients during 2007; they all regurgitated some of the medication. One person lived 3½ days.
- During 2007, no physician referrals were made to the Oregon Medical Board.