

Act No. 27 (S.108). Health; patient choice at end of life; physicians; immunity

An act relating to repealing the sunset on provisions pertaining to patient choice at end of life

This act repeals a July 1, 2016 sunset, leaving in place a statutory process by which a physician may receive immunity from civil and criminal liability and professional disciplinary action for prescribing to a patient with a terminal condition medication for the patient to self-administer to hasten his or her own death. The act also repeals provisions that would have taken effect on July 1, 2016 and would have provided immunity for physicians who took certain steps with respect to a patient with a terminal condition, including prescribing a dose of medication that may have been lethal to the patient, if the patient later made an independent decision to self-administer a lethal dose of the medication. The act requires the Department of Health to adopt rules to facilitate the collection of information about compliance with provisions regarding patient choice at the end of life and to generate a public report every two years, starting in 2018. It allows the Commissioner of Health to receive information from the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System in order to identify patients with terminal conditions who filled prescriptions for medication to be self-administered for the purpose of hastening their deaths.

Effective Date: May 20, 2015