# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO. 1279**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 26 APRIL 2018**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 13)**

**Ms D Carter (Cope) to ask the Minister of Health:**

(1) With reference to the SA Law Commission (SALC)’s work (details furnished) into end-of-life decisions and the SALC not making any recommendation on active voluntary euthanasia, (a) what is the policy position of his department on (i) managing the pain of terminally-ill patients and the doctrine of double effect, (ii) withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining treatment from patients at the request of a patient who is mentally competent to make such decisions (aa) personally or (bb) by means of an Advance Directive, commonly referred to as passive euthanasia and (b) would his department support the introduction of legislation on assisted dying, commonly referred to as active voluntary euthanasia;

(2) whether he has found, in the interest of patients, their families and medical practitioners, that there is a need to clarify all or some of the aforementioned matters legislatively to ensure greater clarity and protection for all concerned; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1379E

**REPLY:**

(1) (a) The policy position of the Department on -

(i) Managing the pain of terminally-ill patients is obtained from the World Health Organisation's resolution of Palliative Care. Terminally-ill patients must be provided adequate analgesia to stay from pain until the end.

(ii) withholding and withdrawing life-sustaining treatment is a decision taken by the treating doctor and must only be based on his or her clinical evaluation and not on anybody's request.

(b) No.

(2) Our policy on terminally-ill patients is adequately outlined in the Palliative Care policy.

END.