

Government to Ease Rules That Stop Patients Getting Painkillers

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The government has taken steps to make it easier for seriously ill patients to get pain-relief medicine.

The government on Monday issued a decree to make it easier for seriously ill patients to get access to painkillers, a move prompted by the suicide of a Navy admiral who left behind a note blaming his plight on state authorities.

The Health Ministry together with several other ministries and scientific bodies have until July 22 to draw up documentation simplifying the process of obtaining restricted medicine, according to the [order](#), published Monday on the government's website.

The government also instructed the relevant bodies to organize courses aimed at teaching doctors how to administer pain-relief techniques to seriously ill patients.

Russia's government runs a tight anti-drugs policy, meaning that even terminally ill patients have to fill out a wide range of documents before they can get painkillers.

In February, terminal cancer sufferer Rear Admiral Vyacheslav Apanasenko committed

suicide after his family was unable to obtain painkillers for him, leading to an investigation.

"I ask you not to blame anyone except the Health Ministry and the government. I am ready to suffer myself, but witnessing the suffering of my relatives and loved ones is unbearable," Apanasenko said in his suicide letter.

In March, eight patients committed suicide in Moscow after failing to obtain pain-restricting drugs, Lenta.ru reported.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev last month signed a decree simplifying the use of restricted drugs for medicinal purposes, while maintaining control over their circulation.

Read more:

[Suicide of Terminally Ill Admiral Prompts Health Ministry Probe](#)

[Rear Admiral's Suicide Highlights Medical Crisis](#)

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