



“Assisted Suicide Statute”

Fatally Flawed, Dangerous for Maryland Patients

The so-called “End of Life Option Bill” or A.S.S. if passed into law, would decriminalize Assisted Suicide and create a legal right for physicians and others to prescribe lethal drugs to an individual to bring about the individual’s unnatural death. The bill will create legal loopholes for medical providers to deny life sustaining care.

Important Reasons to Oppose A.S.S.

- Proponents of the bill want you to believe suicide is a personal choice, which is not true. This bill will change the way we all face death. **This bill protects doctors and allows insurance companies to ration or deny healthcare, diminishing the medical standard of care for all of us.**
- **This bill puts Maryland’s most vulnerable populations at risk**-including individuals with disabilities, minorities, those experiencing poverty, those with mental illness, our veterans and those suffering from prescription or other drug addictions.
- **Lawmakers nationwide reject ASS.** The Maryland General Assembly has rejected some form of this bill at least six times. The Assembly reaffirmed its intent to classify Assisted Suicide as a criminal act by rejecting this bill in several previous legislative years.
- **This bill creates a financial incentive for insurance companies and state health plans to deny life saving care.** In Oregon and California – states which allow assisted suicide – patients have been denied payment for treatments to save their lives, but have been told that less-costly lethal drugs would be covered. Recently a veteran in Canada who applied for a wheelchair lift, was offered ASS instead.
- **Non-physicians are now prescribing death and no trained medical personnel are required to be present at the time the lethal drugs are taken,** creating the opportunity for an heir or abusive caregiver to coerce the patient to take the deadly drugs. The physician is not required to respond to any complications.
- **ASS is now being prescribed for mental health reasons, not for lethal diagnosis.** People with terminal diagnoses often outlive a doctor's prediction and some diagnoses are just wrong. The definition of “terminal illness” is arbitrary and could include patients who are not dying, as has happened in Oregon. Patients may even be prescribed death for depression or anorexia.
- **Modern medical science has the ability to control patient pain.** Inadequate pain control is NOT the primary reason why patients request lethal drugs.
- **Depression leads some to seek suicide, but depression is treatable.** Mental Health assessments and referrals in this bill are inadequate. There is no requirement for mental health screening or treatment.
- **People may feel they are a "burden" and be coerced into suicide.** An option to die can easily become a responsibility to die for the most vulnerable.
- **ASS makes suicide socially acceptable.** States which have legalized ASS have experienced increased suicide rates.

To protect Maryland patients from the dangers of the Assisted Suicide Statute, visit www.mdrtl.org to contact your state legislators and urge him/her not to make an A.S.S. of you and me. Vote NO!