

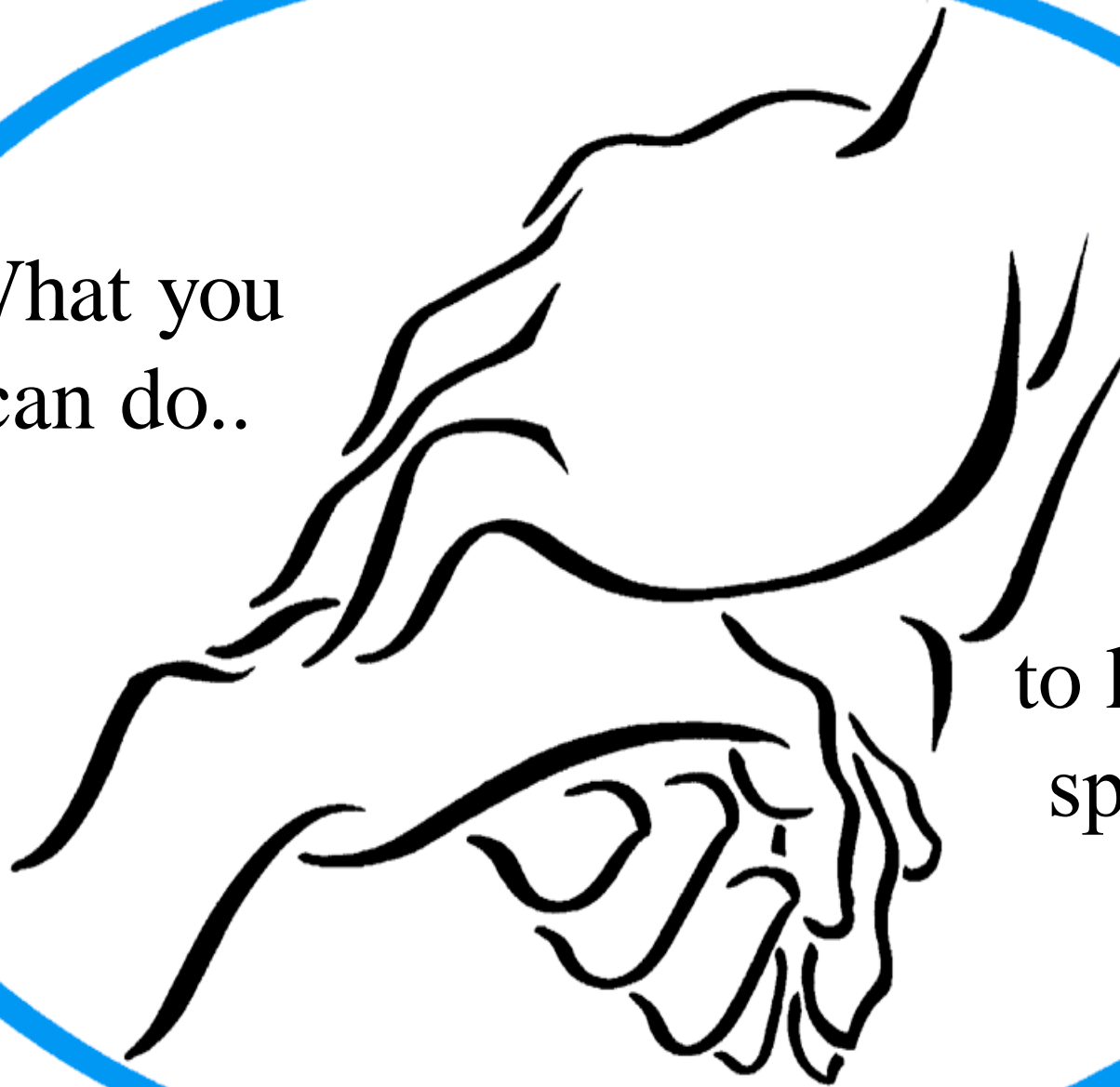
Limiting the Spread of Physician-Assisted Suicide

Physicians for Compassionate Care Education Foundation

www.pccef.org



What you
can do..



to limit the
spread...

The American Medical Association

- **Policy: E-2.211 Physician-Assisted Suicide**
- ...allowing physicians to participate in assisted suicide would cause more harm than good. Physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks.

Pro-Suicide Strategies

1. Change the language:
create euphemisms
2. Disengage and marginalize physicians
3. Paint Oregon's DWDA as a "success"

Our Response: Four Practical Approaches

1. Improve end-of-life care
2. Tell the truth about Oregon
3. Engage physicians
4. Take back the language

Improving End of Life Care

- For those with whom we come in contact
 - Recognize suffering and crisis at end of life
 - Dignity preserving interventions
 - Make the last part of life the best part of life
- Promotion of “improving end of life care”
 - To all health care professionals, administrators, volunteers, public servants, religious organizations, etc...
 - To the families, friends, and caregivers of those who are ill
- Increase awareness of ‘bigger’ issues
 - Discussing Role of Physician in Society
 - Protection of the Poor and Vulnerable

Telling the Truth About Oregon

- No patient safeguards
- No regulatory oversight
- No judicial recourse (unique in medicine!)
- “Intractable pain” is a scare tactic
- \$\$ drives decisions about assisted suicide
- Patient care worsens after lethal prescription

Engaging Physicians

(You're not Alone!)

Who else is opposed?

- AMA and all 50 state medical societies
- Many disabilities rights organizations
- Both liberals and conservatives
Bill Clinton, Ralph Nader
- 25 states have voted down assisted suicide

Engaging Physicians: Physicians for Compassionate Care Education Foundation

- Association of physicians, health professionals, associates, and friends
- Dedicated to preserving the physician-patient relationship
- The physician role is to heal when possible, comfort always, and never intentionally harm.



Why PCCEF Opposes Physician-Assisted Suicide

- Changes the role of the physician from healer to executioner
- Undermines the essential trust in the patient-physician relationship
- Endangers the value that society places on life, especially for those who are most vulnerable



PCCEF History

- 1994: Oregon Medical Association votes “neutral position” on Measure 16 (DWDA)
- PCCEF was formed
 - OMA then voted 123 to 1: “fatally flawed”
 - Helped to get a referral to voters (measure 51)
- PCCEF fights assisted suicide legislation
 - Similar bills failed in 12 states and the UK
 - Coalitions of healthcare professionals, hospice workers, disability-rights advocates, & minority groups are involved, using resources provided by PCCEF



PCCEF History

- 2008: PCCEF/Washington is formed



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PCCEF Physician Pledge

www.pccef.org



My Pledge to my Patients

I will treat the sick according to my best ability and judgment, always striving to do no harm. Whenever I care for a terminally-ill patient, I will provide optimal comfort care until natural death.

I will also support my patients' wishes not to prolong the dying process with futile care. I will never give a deadly drug to anyone even if asked, nor will I suggest suicide.

I will always affirm and guard these ethical principles with integrity, recognizing that every human life is inherently valuable.



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PCCEF 'Take the Pledge' Campaign

Doctors

- Tell your patients where you stand on physician-assisted suicide

Patients

- Find out where all of your doctors stand on physician-assisted suicide
- **Ask your doctor to take the pledge!**



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Take Back the Language!

- Compassion & Choices has been successful
 - Euphemisms a key strategy
 - Their name is a euphemism!
 - They have avoided the word “suicide”
- We need to fight euphemisms
 - The physician is ordering a medical killing
 - Direct, intentional killing is always wrong
 - The patient is committing suicide which is a tragedy



Taking Back the Language

- Use the words “physician-assisted suicide”
On Pro-Life Sunday this year talk about
 - Abortion
 - Physician-Assisted Suicide
 - Euthanasia
- Do not use or accept their language
so-called “Death with Dignity” or “Aid in Dying”
- Use precise language
This is Situational Killing and Suicide

Summary

1. Improve end-of-life care
2. Tell the truth about Oregon
3. Engage physicians
4. Take back the language



PCCEF in Washington

- Educating Health Care Professionals
 - Online at www.pccef.org
 - Speaker Training / Presentations / Resources
- We need your help
 - Spreading the message: “Take the Pledge”
 - Growing PCCEF Washington membership
 - With financial support



Physicians for Compassionate Care
Education Foundation

Internet Resources

- www.noassistedsuicide.com
- www.pccef.org
- www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/pas/index.shtml
- www.dredf.org (click on Assisted Suicide)
- www.internationaltaskforce.org
- www.euthanasiaprevention.on.ca