

PRESS RELEASE - May 5, 2004

**PROOF OF FAILED ASSISTED-SUICIDE SAFEGUARDS;
DEPRESSED PATIENT PRESCRIBED LETHAL DRUGS**

Tomorrow, the shocking facts about a depressed Oregon cancer patient prescribed assisted-suicide drugs will be revealed at the national scientific meeting of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) in New York City. This disturbing case contains facts of key importance to any state considering following Oregon in legalizing assisted suicide. The case may also have bearing on an upcoming Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals assisted-suicide decision—a decision likely to be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. This important decision concerns a Department of Justice ruling that disallows use of federally controlled substances for the purpose of doctor-assisted suicide even in Oregon, the only state where the practice has been legalized. Tomorrow's medical report to the nation's psychiatrists describes the first ever case of legalized assisted suicide in Oregon that is based on extensive medical and psychiatric records. Out of a wish to help others, the patient provided written permission to the authors to obtain his medical and psychiatric records and to discuss his case publicly without disguising his identity.

Assisted-suicide activists promised voters that depressed patients with serious illnesses would never be given overdoses of lethal drugs. They said there were safeguards. But, as this case proves, there are no effective safeguards for the vulnerable and mentally ill.

The details of this pivotal case will be provided in a second press release tomorrow morning. The full text of the scientific paper will also be made available at that time. Both that press release and the scientific paper will be embargoed until 2 pm EDT, May 6.