

## Still On The Fence About H.B. 7015?

Let's review the problems with H.B. 7015:

- Makes false distinction between assisted suicide and “aid in dying”<sup>1</sup> – Sec. 1(2); Sec. 15
- Forbids use of the word 'suicide' – Sec. 12(c); Sec. 15(b)
- An heir or beneficiary could still get two friends to witness the signing of a request – Sec. 3
- “Self-administer” defined as “act of ingesting” – Sec. 1(18)
- Witness not required at the time lethal drugs are ingested – Sec. 9(a)(2)
- Requires falsification of death certificate: “shall list” underlying illness as cause of death – Sec. 9(b)
- “A person familiar with the patient's manner of communicating” may speak for the patient – Sec. 1(4)
- Psychiatric consultation optional – Sec. 8(a); Sec. 10(6)
- No requirement to make reports to the Department of Public Health
- No requirement to conduct compliance audits
- Establishes no independently verifiable means of revoking consent; can be verbal – Sec. 5(a)
- Disposal of unused lethal drugs is on the honor system – Sec. 11

H.B. 7015 should be ended, not amended because:

- Elder abuse is thought to go widely underreported and is expected to rise<sup>2</sup>
- It is NOT TRUE that in Oregon, there is no evidence of abuse and no potential for abuse<sup>3,4,5,6</sup>
- It brings distrust into the doctor-patient relationship<sup>4</sup>
- In Oregon, “Death with Dignity” has correlated with a significant overall rise in suicide<sup>7</sup>
- It discriminates between categories of people who suffer and creates “lives not worth living”
- Experience of other Western countries shows gradual expansion to more categories of people<sup>8,9</sup>
- End-of-life prognoses are difficult and can be inaccurate;<sup>10</sup> years of good life could be taken<sup>11,12,13</sup>
- It validates people's fears about being unwanted and burdensome
- Most people in Oregon who choose suicide cite concerns about autonomy and dignity; uncontrolled pain is near the bottom of the list<sup>14</sup>
- In 2014, only 3% of patients who died using Oregon's ‘model’ law were referred to a psychiatrist<sup>14</sup>
- As of 2004, dying patients experienced MORE and WORSE pain than before Oregon's law<sup>15</sup>
- We could and should improve access to support services
- Doctors who are “resource-conscious” (under pressure to cut costs or save space) are more likely to suggest a lethal prescription<sup>16</sup>
- There are many ways to make a vulnerable person feel worthless without blatant coercion
- American Medical Association: assisted suicide is “fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer”; “difficult or impossible to control”<sup>17</sup>
- THE STATE PROMOTES DEATH AS A SOLUTION TO LIFE'S PROBLEMS

**Protect Dignity With Better End-of-Life Care, Not “Aid In Dying”!**



**ACTION**

[www.ctfamily.org](http://www.ctfamily.org)

## Resources

The complete text of H.B. 7015 is available at <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2015/TOB/H/2015HB-07015-R00-HB.htm>

1. Becker, Arielle Levin. "Superior court judge dismisses doctors' request to prescribe lethal medication to terminally ill." *The Hartford Courant*, 8 June 2010 [http://articles.courant.com/2010-06-08/news/hc-right-to-die-0608-20100607\\_1\\_terminally-ill-doctors-lawsuit-doctors-case](http://articles.courant.com/2010-06-08/news/hc-right-to-die-0608-20100607_1_terminally-ill-doctors-lawsuit-doctors-case)
2. Sewell, Dan. "Elder abuse, use of shelters rising." *USA Today*, 27 January 2013 <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/01/27/elder-abuse-shelters/1869065/>
3. "Some Oregon Assisted Suicide Abuses and Complications." *Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund*. [Http://dredf.org/assistedsuicide/18\\_Oregon\\_abuses.pdf](Http://dredf.org/assistedsuicide/18_Oregon_abuses.pdf)
4. Judson, Kathryn. "Assisted suicide? 'I was afraid to leave my husband alone again with doctors and nurses!'" *Hawaii Free Press Letters to Editor*, 15 February 2011. <http://hawaiifreepress.com/main/ArticlesDailyNews/tabid/65/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/3647/February-2011-Letters-to-the-Editor.aspx>
5. "Sawyer arraigned on state fraud charges." *KTVZ.com*, July 2011. <http://www.ktvz.com/news/Sawyer-Arraigned-on-State-Fraud-Charges/-/413192/619440/-/lxdb2k/-/index.html>
6. "Death case ends with settlement." *Polk County Itemizer-Observer*, 27 August 2002 <http://www.polkio.com/ns/gen/2647/death-case-ends-with-settlement>
7. Staff writer. "Oregon suicide rate higher than national average and rising." *The Portlander*, 9 September 2010. <http://theportlander.com/2010/09/09/oregon-suicide-rate-higher-than-national-average-and-rising/>
8. "Belgian MPs vote to extend euthanasia to children of all ages." *The Telegraph*, 13 February 2014. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/belgium/10636992/Belgian-MPs-vote-to-extend-euthanasia-to-children-of-all-ages.html>
9. Schadenberg, Alex. "Belgian woman with anorexia nervosa dies by euthanasia." *Euthanasia Prevention Coalition*, 10 February 2013. <http://alexschadenberg.blogspot.com/2013/02/belgian-woman-with-anorexia-nervosa.html>
10. "The Massachusetts Medical Society Opposes Question 2: Prescribing Medication to End Life." *Massachusetts Medical Society*. [www.massmed.org/question2](http://www.massmed.org/question2)
11. Sherman, Barbara. "Cancer survivor now opposes assisted suicide." *Portland Tribune*, 31 October 2013. <http://portlandtribune.com/rc/62-news/199552-cancer-survivor-now-opposes-assisted-suicide?tmpl=component>
12. Dore, Margaret. "John Norton: A Cautionary Tale." *Choice Is An Illusion*, 22 September 2012. <http://www.massagainstaassistedsuicide.org/2012/09/john-norton-cautionary-tale.html>
13. Lapook, Jonathan. "Experimental cancer therapy extends woman's life by nine years." *CBS News*, 11 March 2015. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/experimental-cancer-therapy-extends-womans-life-by-9-years/>
14. "Oregon's Death with Dignity Act – 2014." *Oregon Health Authority*. <https://public.health.oregon.gov/ProviderPartnerResources/EvaluationResearch/DeathwithDignityAct/Documents/year17.pdf>
15. Colburn, Don. "An OHSU study finds that pain management has not kept up with expectations of the 1997 law." *The Oregonian*, 23 July 2004. [http://dredf.org/assisted\\_suicide/study\\_release.shtml](http://dredf.org/assisted_suicide/study_release.shtml)
16. Sulmasy, Daniel P., M.D.; Benjamin P. Linas, B.A.; Karen F. Gold, Ph. D.; and Kevin A. Schulman, M.D. "Physician resource use and willingness to participate in assisted suicide." *Archives of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 158, 11 May 1998, p. 978
17. Code of Medical Ethics, Opinion 2.211. *American Medical Association*. <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/physician-resources/medical-ethics/code-medical-ethics/opinion2211.page?>