

Iowa Coalition for Ethical Care

Iowa Coalition for Ethical Care
P.O. Box 12274
Des Moines, IA 50312

January 2021

Members of the 2021 Iowa General Assembly:

- Do you think it would be fair for your insurance company to deny coverage of life-saving drugs for your mother but instead offer to pay for cheaper lethal drugs?
- Why are suicide rates markedly increased in states that have legalized assisted suicide?
- In states with assisted suicide laws, why do some receive suicide prevention services while those with disabilities receive suicide assistance?

These are just a few questions to ponder when considering the proposed legalization of assisted suicide.

The **Iowa Coalition for Ethical Care** is a statewide alliance dedicated to preventing the legalization of doctor-prescribed suicide. We interact regularly with individuals who are older, have disabilities or who are suffering from a terminal illness. We are devoted to the mission of serving people who are suffering or facing the end of life. We believe they would be under increased risk of abuse from the legalization of doctor-prescribed suicide in Iowa. **Please do not sponsor or support a bill in Iowa to enable doctor-prescribed suicide.**

Assisted suicide laws are neither good health care nor good public policy. Despite sustained lobbying over many years, the American Medical Association has continued its opposition to assisted suicide, saying “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.” The safeguards and oversight contained in proposed doctor-prescribed suicide legislation are inadequate to protect vulnerable individuals. The version of “autonomy” advocates of assisted suicide propose makes the vulnerable more anonymous and subject to abuse, not less.

Current medical practice is extremely effective in relieving pain and advances in palliative care and collaboration among medical professionals continues. We are fortunate to live at a time there are many alternatives that truly provide protection and care for the suffering and dying.

However, the demands of the financial bottom line, the burden of which almost always falls to the most vulnerable, has found some states with legal assisted suicide refuse to pay for some medical treatments while offering to pay for suicide. A prescription for a lethal dose of drugs can be far less expensive than life-saving treatments or efforts to ease pain and suffering. These financial interests can be very powerful when aligned against the vulnerable, especially if presented under the mantle of compassion.

We expect legislation to be introduced in Iowa to legalize doctor-prescribed suicide. As a legislator, your job is to weigh the potential benefits and risks of proposed policies. Preserving the dignity of the suffering and dying cannot be achieved by public policy that proposes dignity for suicide. We are united in opposing any legislation or court action that permits doctors to participate in the suicide of a patient by prescribing a lethal dose of drugs.

The Iowa Coalition for Ethical Care is an informal group working to oppose the legalization of doctor-prescribed suicide. Members include:

**American Academy of Medical Ethics • Dubuque County Right to Life • The FAMiLY Leader
Iowans for LIFE • Iowa Catholic Conference • Iowa Right to Life • Life Right Action
Lutheran Family Service • Lutherans for Life**

Coordinator: Tom Chapman, Iowa Catholic Conference, 515-243-6256, tom@iowacatholicconference.org