

Testimony of Tom Newman M.D. (retired) on Physician Assisted Suicide

My son was 41 when he lost neck and arm strength. Fasciculations rippled across his chest. It was ALS and he would die too soon.

Neurologists confirmed this. Alternative therapies failed. He realized the difficult time ahead would end in death. He struggled. He spoke with his brother and close friends. He decided to share with other friends as they visited. When he shared important experiences in his life his friends were encouraged to address their own life struggles. As word spread — more friends visited. They came from among those he grew up with — and from Northwest where he attended school and worked. They shared across the country — over the internet — updating one another on the latest visit, the latest physical state...

As he physically wasted, his inner strength became more manifest — especially in his graceful acceptance of what he was enduring — and in the sharing of his life with others. He was surrounded and cared for by those who loved him and valued each moment of his life. He was determined to live his life to its fullest - but was not afraid to die,. He wanted no artificial life support.

His shortness of breath was severely increasing. Two days before he died he told me he no longer wanted to stay here but wanted to go on. The next afternoon he was taken to the hospital where a number of friends just arriving from the Northwest met us. Our family remained with him. He died peacefully the next morning. His disease had lasted six months.

A well intentioned friend from Oregon had offered to take him there for assisted suicide. in effect saying, "Your life is of no value now."

Suicide totally devalues human life removing it's dignity. It isn't compassion. My son lived and died with dignity, - which is: - "The excellence that deserves recognition and praise in a person." This Bill re-defines suicide to dignify it.

The words, — ***Death with Dignity*** in laws is a ploy, a political marketing tool - designed to sell lawmakers and the public the comforting - **idea** - of physicians' tacit approval of suicide assisted by a lethal prescription. The physician, a healer, becomes an instrument of death. **Remember, physical and emotional suffering of terminally ill patients can be controlled medically.**

By the way **14 years ago** I was expected to live only 3-6 months because i had metastatic bladder cancer - 20% live 2 years, Rare to find 5 year survivors. Glad to be here with you today. **Thank You.**