



Compassion & Choices Arizona

Compassion in Dying - End of Life Choices

Previous Issues at: www.choicesarizona.org

Issue #2 - 2008

Compassion & Choices Arizona (formerly known as Hemlock Society or End of Life Choices)

P. O. Box 12126, Tucson, AZ 85732 * Toll Free 1-877-535-3600 * Email: info@choicesarizona.org * Web: www.choicesarizona.org

WASHINGTON STATE'S PROPOSED DEATH WITH DIGNITY INITIATIVE WILL "MOST LIKELY" BE ON BALLOT

A ccording to a story in The Seattle Times, supporters of a so-called "Death With Dignity" initiative turned in an estimated 320,000 signatures to the Secretary of State's Office, virtually guaranteeing that Initiative 1000 will be on the November ballot.

Former Governor Booth Gardner, a Parkinson's patient who filed the initiative in January, predicted, *"Voters will pass the initiative because they value choice in how they die."*

The initiative, based on the Oregon Law, reads:

Would allow mentally competent adult residents of Washington to request and receive a prescription for a lethal dose of medication, provided that they have been diagnosed with a condition that is expected to kill them within six months.

The request must be confirmed by two inde

pendent witnesses, a second doctor must confirm the original diagnosis, and the patient must be determined to be free from any mental condition impairing his judgment. The patient must make two requests separated in time by at least 15 days.

Would not allow patients to sign away the decision to anyone else in the event they were to become mentally incompetent, or to give permission to anyone else to administer the medication if they became unable to do so. In short, they must make the request and take the lethal medicine themselves.

Any doctor or health-care organization can opt out of providing the services.

Law would specifically say: "Actions taken in accordance with this act do not, for any purpose, constitute suicide, assisted suicide, mercy killing, or homicide, under the law."

JOIN US AS WE RALLY FOR END OF LIFE CHOICES

The date is not yet final but will be held on a Wednesday, mid-to-late-January 2009 from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Once again, we plan to rally at the Arizona State Legislature! We will let them know that the residents of the state of Arizona are serious about passing an Oregon-type aid-in-dying bill. The Arizona bill, written and introduced by Representative Lopez, District 29, Tucson, for the past several years, has been written with the utmost care to protect both physicians and patients in this undertaking. The bill asks for aid in dying, and control of suffering for terminally ill patients. If the participation is great enough in your area, we will again provide FREE bus transportation. Watch for specific details in the next issue of our newsletter.

TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER OR STATE LEADERSHIP

THIS IS YOUR STATE ORGANIZATION - PLEASE LET US KNOW HOW YOU WANT TO HELP! QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS WELCOME.

CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Casa Grande - Francene Haskins
(520) 836-9272

Cochise County - Billie Stockl
(520) 803-9285
Email: bstockl@cox.net

Flagstaff - Need a Chapter Leader!
Contact: C&C Arizona Toll Free 1-877-535-3600

Green Valley - Peter Smith
(520) 648-8487
Email: peterd@laposadagv.net

NW Valley (Carefree, El Mirage, Glendale, Morristown, Peoria, Sun City, Sun City West, Surprise, Wickenburg, Goodyear, and Youngtown)
Irene Weitzman
(623) 214-6552
Email: ireneweitz@aol.com

Metro Phoenix Area - Loretta Lande
(480) 990-8086
Email: lorettalande@aol.com

Prescott - Need a Chapter Leader!
Contact: Margot J. Champagne
(928) 776-3025
Email: MJCESq100@aol.com

Sedona - Deborah Darby
(928) 634-3237
Email: peacefulpassing@msn.com

Sun Lakes - Bob Wallace
(480) 802-4327
Email: joyrobwall@wbhsi.net

Tucson - Cherie Esser
(520) 825-2219
Email: jcbesser825@yahoo.com

Yuma - Need a Chapter Leader!
Contact: C&C Toll Free 1-877-535-3600

STATE LEADERSHIP

WELCOME TO OUR TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS, SHIRLEY BELLAMY AND BILL HALEY! AND A BIG "THANK YOU" TO THOSE WHO SERVE, OR HAVE SERVED, AS OFFICERS IN SUPPORT OF OUR ORGANIZATION!

Compassion & Choices Arizona Board

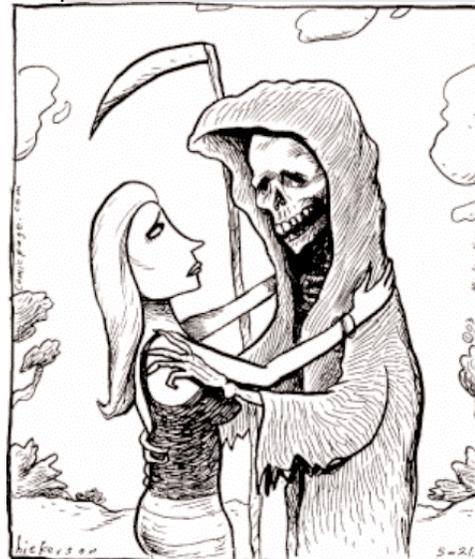
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Cherie Esser, Tucson
David Brandt-Erichsen, Tucson
Irene Weitzman, Sun City West
Margot Champagne, Prescott

Newsletter Editor

Deb Darby (send info: peacefulpassing@msn.com)

Compassion & Choices Arizona Medical Advisory Group

Dr. Robert H. Furman
Dr. Harvey Turner



"You're a swell girl, Lucy ... but I can't tell if you like me for me, or for my ability to refrain from dragging you into the hoary darkness."

**What's so
Funny
About Death?**

Courtesy of <http://www.willamette.edu/~sbasu/poli303/cartoons%20on%20death.htm>

CHAPTER NEWS, UPDATES & INFORMATION

NORTHWEST VALLEY SPRING CHAPTER MEETING SUCCESSFUL

The Northwest Valley spring chapter meeting was held Wednesday March 26, 2008.

Approximately 80 people came to the Foundation Center in Sun City West. The topic was, "Packing Your Suitcase for Over the Rainbow: Making Responsible End-of-Life Choices and Preparations".

The video, Final Exit by Derek Humphry, was shown and our speaker, Julian Bailey Rush, former co-director of the Client Services Program of Compassion & Choices, updated the video and discussed considerations in hastening one's death when terminally ill.

He also discussed the Funeral Consumer's Alliance as a less expensive funeral arrangement. Refreshments were served and the delicious cookies brought by Elaine Harr and Sandy Price were devoured!

SEDONA CHAPTER INVITES ALL TO ATTEND "END OF LIFE CHOICES: EMBRACING THE JOURNEY" ON SEPTEMBER 20

An all-day series of workshops relating to many different aspects of aging and end of life is being offered to the public free of charge in Sedona on September 20.

Topics ranging from assisted living to cremation will be covered. Compassion & Choices Sedona Chapter president, Deborah Darby, is the event chair and will present on the organization's belief that the right to die is a personal choice.

For more info, call Deborah at 928-634-3237.

REMEMBERING A DEDICATED MEMBER

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of Ruthie Steinberg. Ruthie passed away of a fatal stroke on January 11, 2008. She was one of the original members of our organization, attended our Board of Directors meetings, and was the voice behind our toll free number since its inception. She played a very important role in the organization and she will never be forgotten.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST SUPPORTS LEGAL RIGHT TO TERMINAL MEDICATION

Thanks to Bob Wallace for supplying this information

The Twenty-sixth General Synod of the United Church of Christ (UCC) formally called upon the local churches, conference and Justice and Witness Ministries in consultation with the UCC Disabilities Ministries, Council for Health and Human Service Ministries, the UCC Professional Chaplains and Counselors, the UCC Faith Community Nurses and Physicians to support the proposal that: "On the grounds of compassion and choice, if strict safeguards to prevent abuse are followed, a terminally ill and mentally competent adult should have a legal right to request and receive medication from a willing physician to hasten death if the patient finds his or her suffering to be unbearable."

REMINDER:

For coverage on the website and in the newsletter, please be SURE to notify both David Brandt-Erichsen (web manager) and Deborah Darby (Newsletter Editor) of your upcoming Compassion & Choices Arizona events.

davidbe@davidbe.net

peacefulpassing@msn.com

RIGHT TO KNOW END-OF-LIFE OPTIONS ACT WINS IN CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY

We are excited about progress in the California Legislature and want to share the good news with you right away. If it passes in the full Legislature, Compassion & Choices' Right to Know End-of-Life Options Act will be the first law of its kind in the nation. Patients will gain the right to receive full and frank disclosure of all their legal end-of-life options, if they ask for this information. Our usual opponents, Right-to-Lifers and radical disability activists, oppose even the right to a candid conversation! But with the state's medical association at our side in this fight, we believe we will be able to put this bill on Governor Schwarzenegger's desk by autumn.

NOTE: Unfortunately, as of July 2, this bill was amended in the California Senate in such a way that palliative sedation and voluntarily stopping eating and drinking (VSED) have been removed from the text, making the bill less effective in terms of informing patients of all their options.

OBAMA SUPPORTS RIGHT TO DIE REGRETS SCHIAVO VOTE

"I do believe in the importance of medicine and that if somebody is terminally ill, relieving their pain and suffering is the right thing to do," said Illinois Senator and presumptive presidential candidate Barack Obama during a Compassion Forum at Messiah College on April 13.

The decision to end suffering by choosing aid in

dying should be left to a terminally ill individual, that person's physician and loved ones, he said.

He also said that he regrets voting with the Senate on the Terry Schiavo bill, saying, "A lot of us, including me, left the Senate with a bill that allowed Congress to intrude where it shouldn't have. I think I should have stayed in the Senate and fought more for making sure that families make those decisions, and not bureaucrats and politicians."

TEN YEARS OF DEATH WITH DIGNITY IN OREGON

More Oregon terminally ill patients chose to use the state's Death with Dignity Act this year than ever before, according to a report released today by the Oregon Department of Human Services.

The 10th annual report confirms the safety and effectiveness of the landmark Oregon law. Death with Dignity's many strict safeguards ensure the law does not unfairly target the poor, disabled or minority populations. Everyone who used the law in 2007 was mentally competent and within six months of death.

As in all previous years, many more people requested the lethal medication than used the prescriptions. In these cases, the comfort they received from having the medication was all they needed to achieve a peaceful death.

Of the 85 patients who requested and received life-ending prescriptions in 2007, only 46 actually administered the medication. An additional three took medications prescribed prior to 2007. Since it was passed in 1997, 341 people have used the Death with Dignity law to end their lives.

AMSA Shows Strong Support for Aid in Dying

The American Medical Student Association (AMSA) renewed its support for aid in dying by updating its current position on the practice and adopting a new policy.

The progressive group of more than 68,000 physicians-in-training and practicing physicians joins the American Medical Women's Association in their support for aid in dying. Together, the groups are leading the nation's medical professionals toward more patient-directed end-of-life care. The student association first adopted a supportive aid-in-dying policy in the mid 1990's. The new policy, approved at the group's March convention, is similar to the one AMWA adopted in 2007.

The student group's position also supports the practice of aggressive pain management including palliative sedation, as well as provision of a full range of information to terminally ill patients about their legal end-of-life care options.

NO "SUICIDE" LABEL ON WASHINGTON INITIATIVE

According to *The Seattle Times Spokesman-Review*, a judge refused to add the words "physician-assisted suicide" to the ballot or official voters pamphlet description. It was a victory for Washington's proposed Death With Dignity initiative.

"It is a somewhat loaded term," said Thurston County Superior Court Judge Chris Wickham.

Instead of "suicide," voters will read that Initiative 1000(I-1000) would allow some terminally ill patients "to request and self-administer lethal medication" prescribed by a doctor.

Wickham's decision largely upheld a description written by the state attorney general's office.

The ruling was a setback for critics, including a Catholic doctors group and activists for the rights of disabled people.

Filed in early January by former Governor Booth Gardner, I-1000 would allow a doctor to legally prescribe lethal drugs to a terminally ill person who had less than six months to live, so long as two doctors agree that the patient is mentally competent. Writing such a prescription is a felony in Washington. Oregon is the only state that allows it.

Proponents argue that it's inaccurate to call it suicide when a dying patient chooses to hasten death with a prescription. Labeling that "suicide," I-1000 attorney Jessica Skelton said, is "politicized language" that "implies a value judgment and carries with it a social stigma."

As in the Oregon law, the only assistance by a doctor would be the writing of a lethal prescription. The doctor could not administer the fatal medication.

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**FOR HELP FROM
OUR CLIENT SUPPORT PROGRAM,
CALL 1-800-247-7421 AND ASK TO SPEAK
TO SOMEONE IN "CLIENT SUPPORT"**

Our Compassion & Choices Arizona Chapter Leaders and members as well as our toll free number receive many inquiries from individuals wanting information on hastening one's death.

For such information, please call the National organization of Compassion & Choices at 1-800-247-7421 and ask to speak to someone in Client Support. National has specially trained employees who will assess your needs and provide the appropriate guidance.

Compassion & Choices AZ members are neither trained nor qualified to provide such information, and can only refer you to our National organization for assistance.

Yes, I want to join Compassion & Choices!

I understand that this automatically includes national membership and state membership privileges in Compassion & Choices Arizona and membership in my local chapter as well. **Please make checks payable to Compassion & Choices.**



Membership Options

- Individual Membership (one year): \$45 Life Membership for Individual: \$450
 Couple Membership (one year): \$60 Life Membership for Couple: \$600

Remember! If you join for a year, the membership needs to be renewed annually.

- I want to support the cause. Here is an extra \$ _____ contribution. Keep up the good work!

Please send my newsletters (national and state) to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email: _____

Send a check or money order along with this form to:
Compassion & Choices
P. O. Box 101810
Denver, CO 80250

To join with Credit Card: Call 1-800-247-7421 (National Compassion & Choices)

To join online: <http://www.compassionandchoices.org/>

Questions regarding membership must be directed to the National Office at 1-800-247-7427 (ask for "membership").



If your Chapter would like to have Arizona State District 29 Representative Linda Lopez, our Legislative Champion speak to a public meeting in your area, please contact her assistant, Faye Parkin: Fparkin@azleg.state.az.us
Faye handles all of her calendar appointments.

This is the sixth year in a row that Linda has submitted bills supporting the Right to Die. We appreciate her efforts and her willingness to share the information with our membership.

A NATURAL WAY TO GO

Thanks to C&C member Winston Mani*

I served as a Hospice volunteer for about five years. One of my patients in a nursing home was very unhappy. On several occasions he told me he wanted to die. I asked my supervisor if I would be allowed to tell this man how he could die - that is, by discontinuing foods and fluids. The reply was that I could not.

In the last issue of this newsletter Gwen Aloia, a former nursing home employee, was quoted as saying, "I never forgot the suffering I saw." I wonder if she, too, was forbidden to tell patients about this natural way to end their suffering?

In my living will I have included the following statement: "In the event my health condition requires that I be cared for at a long term care facility I reserve the right to decide whether the quality of my life is adequate to continue living. If I decide that it is not I request that I be permitted to discontinue taking both foods and hydration. If I am in a coma or otherwise unable to make this judgement I request my agent for health care make this judgement for me."

My children have accepted this decision and my Primary Care Physician has agreed to continue treating me.

I have lived in a retirement complex now for over ten years. Three of my friends who had been residents here chose this method of passing.

I visited each one during their fasting period. They all were positive about their decision. One had his two children come for a last visit.

They shared a bottle of wine and sang some songs making it a pleasant goodbye.

In my opinion this is the natural way to go.

* If you have an opinion or story to tell, please send it to us at peacefulpassing@msn.com. We may be able to include it in our newsletter! Thank you!

EDITOR'S CORNER

SUPPORT WHAT YOU BELIEVE!

When I believe in something, I can support it wholeheartedly. And I believe in the Right to Die/Death with Dignity. I've chosen Compassion & Choices as my means to have a strong voice in the ongoing need to change the laws. I also sought a way to work with those who are nearing their life's end, although I'm just not able to do that much these days.

So I focus on giving time and energy (and when I can, money) on bringing death and dying out of the closet so to speak. In that capacity, I'm chairing the event committee for an event being held in Sedona on September 20. It isn't a Compassion & Choices event per se, but it's an opportunity for me to speak my truth and tell people about our organization, along with others.

The Sedona Community Center (SCC) is hosting the all-day affair, which is described under **Upcoming Meetings & Events on Page 8**. The director of SCC is the VP of the Sedona Chapter of Compassion & Choices. Her name is Susan Barrington, and she does great work for those of us on the "seasoned" side of life! Her organization is a true treasure, even in the midst of Sedona's beauty and enlightenment.

Please check out the information and plan to attend if you live in the area or feel an urge to come to Sedona!

PS - I do yoga (it "supports" me!) and find it helps balance my life...and that's what the photo above is about: Balance and Strength. **Support what you believe! It will support you back!**



The "well balanced" Deb Darby!



Compassion & Choices Arizona
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Compassion in Dying * End of Life Choices

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Compassion & Choices Arizona supports options for those who are terminally ill and mentally competent to determine their own life's end, including freedom from unnecessary pain and suffering during the last part of life.

Please make sure we have the information about your Chapter events at least six weeks in advance to assure that your event gets good coverage on the website, in the newsletter and with the screaming yellow cards we will prepare and mail to your constituency!

Send info to: info@choicesarizona.org

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS!

THE COCHISE COUNTY CHAPTER OF COMPASSION & CHOICES ARIZONA (C&C AZ) WILL MEET AT 11 AM SATURDAY, AUGUST 16, IN THE MONA BISHOP ROOM OF THE SIERRA VISTA PUBLIC LIBRARY, 2600 E. Tacoma Street. Discussion will include chapter business and a presentation by LifeLegacy. LifeLegacy is an Anatomical Donation Foundation. The donation process includes: (1) Transportation of the donor from anywhere in the continental U.S.; (2) Filing of a legally-required original death certificate; (3) Expedited return of cremated remains to the family for timely closure; (4) Family assistance through the aftercare process, and (5) Summary packet to the family outlining the benefits of their loved ones gift. **There is no cost associated with this donation.** The meeting is free and open to the public. For more info call Billie toll free at 1-877-535-3600, or local Sierra Vista phone number 520-803-9285; visit www.choicesarizona.org.

THE ANNUAL COMPASSION & CHOICES AZ BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING WILL BE HELD SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2008, AT THE GRACE INN (a Best Western Motel) on the west side of I-10 at Elliot Road, Exit 157. We gather at 9:30 AM. for informal greetings; the official meeting will begin at 10:00 AM. The meeting usually lasts until approximately 3 PM. Lunch is paid for by participants. Compassion & Choices AZ Members are invited to attend the Annual Board Meeting but will not have a vote on official business issues. If you wish to attend, please call our toll free number 1-877-535-3600. Our space is normally limited, so we must have a total number of attendees prior to the meeting.

SEDONA CHAPTER CO-SPONSORING "END OF LIFE CHOICES: EMBRACING THE JOURNEY" ALL-DAY SERIES OF WORKSHOPS ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2008 FROM 9 AM TO 3 PM. This meeting is free and includes lunch for the first 60 to register. Topics covered will include all areas of aging and end-of-life planning. The location is the Sedona Community Center, 2615 Melody Lane. **The event is free, but you must pre-register. To register, please call: 928-282-2834.**

SUN CITY WEST, NORTHWEST VALLEY CHAPTER MEETING, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2008 at 1:30 PM in the Coyote Quail room at the Foundation Center 14465 R.H. Johnson Blvd, Sun City West AZ (located between 145th Avenue and Stardust Boulevard). Lee Ann Black, Professional & Consumer Education Director of Hospice of the Valley will speak about "Dispelling the Myth of Hospice".