

Statement to the Health and Government Operations  
HB 0403  
End of life bill  
February 16, 2024  
OPPOSE

Good afternoon Chairman and Distinguished Members,

- My name is Dr. Sandy Christiansen, a board-certified physician licensed in Maryland, National Medical Director of Care Net, and director of the Maryland chapter of the American Academy of Medical Ethics.
- I oppose HB 0403 because it bankrupts the doctor-patient relationship and promotes a culture of death with a devastating ripple effect.
- Our duty is to eradicate the pain—not the patient. To give physicians this power is a **fundamental conflict of interest**. If legalized, patients won't know if their **doctor's ultimate motive is to heal them or to end their life**.
- This bill makes doctors **judge, jury and executioner** and
- Violates the sacred covenant between doctor and patient to first do no harm
  - Physicians are healers, not killers
  - Patients' trust in physicians will be eroded
  - It gives physicians too much power
- It violates Physicians' right to practice in congruence with their moral framework
  - Physicians are not vending machines to dispense a requested product

- Allows physicians' biases to enter into life/death decisions. Studies show that physicians perceive disabled people to have a lower quality of life compared to how the disabled actually view themselves.
- It elevates and normalizes suicide as a viable solution in a society where teen suicide is rampant
- It promotes the demeaning attitude that human frailty and incapacity strip us of our dignity.
- And it promotes a "duty to die" culture

My mother had dementia and spent the last days of her life in the Kline Hospice House where she received exemplary care without hastening her death. She died peacefully and naturally which was a tremendous comfort to our family.

No matter how much you repeat that medical assisted suicide is compassion doesn't make it true. It is the antithesis of the purpose and practice of medicine and should never be part of health care.

I ask for an unfavorable vote on HB 0403.

Notes:

*Care Net: a non-profit organization that supports one of the largest networks of pregnancy centers in North America. With 1,200 affiliates and 30,000 volunteers, we provide immediate support to women and men considering abortion, to equip them for a life decision. Last year alone, our pregnancy centers provided clients with more than \$62 million in free services.*

The AAME was founded to protect and promote the historic values that have provided the longstanding foundation for western medical care. It comprises healthcare professionals that subscribe to the traditional values of the Hippocratic Oath.