

I worked as an Occupational Therapist in adult acute care, rehab, but mainly in homecare and hospice (25 years). I was a caregiver for my mother at her end – she died of what I have- metastatic breast cancer. I have seen the extent of what neurological diseases and cancer due to a person, their family, and the sense of loss of control over one's life that develops. I had cancer in 2011 with treatment into 2013, and once I passed the 5 -year mark cancer free, I never expected it again. But I found out I had cancer again in May 2021. And it was nearly everywhere: brain, skull, multiple bones, lungs, liver, and soft tissue.

One of the worst parts about my metastatic cancer this round is not just the cancer and all the damage it has done to my body, but the treatment itself. Brain radiation was the worst thing I have ever done. The first 3 types chemo were horrible, with difficult to control symptoms, and I continued to get worse. Now on chemo number 4, this miracle drug has kept me alive well past any expectations. It has improved my cancer and I had improved to no active cancer in my body for 4 months. Last month, though, I had a brain scan and they found one dormant tumor getting larger and a new tumor in new place. I am a chemo "lifer". I will need to continue every 3 weeks, until I die, or my body rejects it.

In my life and activities though, it means only the last 10 days of my 21-day cycle can I have a functional life, as the first 10 days are highly symptomatic and limiting. But I persevere. Because in spite of it all, I like life and choose to continue to fight, until I can't anymore.

But with all the cancer damage and treatment damage, as well as continued chemo, life is still a declining struggle. Having been a therapist, caregiver, and patient, I know what to expect. I want this bill for me. I had seen so many people die in pain and so many people have such a poor quality of life at the very end. And near the end of their Earth-bound journey, they would say, 'I just want to go home and be with God, and be with my relatives'. I don't want to suffer in pain the way my mother or my patients suffered near the end of their lives. I don't choose to participate with the loss of self, or put my family through the taking care of me, the suffering of the near-the-end pain, and the dying processes.

I know that even the best hospice cannot relieve every patient's suffering. That's why I want this gentle end-of-life option for myself.

I want people to remember me for the stubborn, fun-loving, caring, and protective person I have always been. I don't want them to remember me for my end-of-life struggles. And those last impressions are very lasting.

I choose Medical Aid in Dying.