

Mr. Michael Vernon  
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Oppose Physician Assisted Suicide

Dear Delegate Schmidt,

The Maryland General Assembly has refused to legalize Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) during six previous legislative sessions, but I am concerned that another round of so-called "medical aid in dying" (MAID) legislation will be introduced in the upcoming 2024 session.

Terms like MAID, Death with Dignity, or End-of-Life Option have been rejected by the American Medical Association (AMA), which has affirmed that Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) is the most accurate description of this practice. The AMA opposes the legalization of PAS because it is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as a healer.

Notably, the legalization of PAS does not grant someone the personal autonomy to decide how they will die. Instead, it gives people the legal right to ask the medical community to help them commit suicide. It will corrupt the medical establishment by coopting the services of doctors, psychiatrists, pharmacists, hospice nurses, and medical examiners.

The bill calls upon medical professionals to change the way they serve the public in the following ways:

- **Medical doctors** are asked to provide a prescription for a lethal dose of drugs to patients who want to die, even if there are alternate treatments available to help them live.
- **Psychiatrists** may be consulted to evaluate people with the expectation they can deem them to be of sound mind when they want to kill themselves by drug overdose.
- **Pharmacists** would be the ones to combine the lethal dose of drugs for patients. Such drug combinations are not standardized. They have not been tested or approved by the FDA for use to end human life.
- **Nurses** who work within hospice and palliative care would need to add the lethal drugs to a liquid to enable the individual to drink the lethal dose. They first need to administer an anti-nausea medication. Complications such as seizures, vomiting, and gasping for air may occur.
- **Medical examiners** must falsify the death certificate and report the cause of death as an illness, not a drug overdose.
- **Emergency personnel, law enforcement and suicide prevention agencies** will not be able to follow well established protocols to prevent people from intentional death by drug overdose.

This law is not needed! Suicide is already too easy, and death by accidental opioid overdose is far too common. People who want to have full autonomy to end their life must do it on their own without the help of anyone, especially the medical professionals we rely on to help us stay alive. No law should expect medical professionals to offer suicide as a "medical treatment" for illness.

As a constituent (or state your profession) in your District, I ask you to oppose any bill that makes medical professionals complicit in the suicide of their patients. Please let me know how you will vote.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

 1/24/24