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Dear Honorable State Legislators,

I can't believe HB 1328 "the end-of-life option act" bill is being introduced again in Maryland. There are so many patient safety issues at stake. There are no protections for the patient against coercion by others, no protections against neglect in treating and diagnosing depression, and no protection against inaccurate diagnoses of terminal illnesses. The patient is in a weakened and debilitated state and should never be pressured internally or externally to end their life. It's at this point that hospice and palliative care are so important and can provide a loving and comfortable environment for patients to live their remaining days maximizing each moment with family and friends to die naturally and peacefully.

I know from personal experience as my mom died when I was 24 from stage 4 ovarian cancer. Every day we had with her was precious and as she was nearing the end of her life her exact words were "I feel like I'm leaving the party early." We did our best to make her every second with us count. There is no way she wanted to end her life.

As a physician, it is my job to protect my patients and their life. I was never taught to kill anyone in medical school. Everything we ever learned in medical school was for healing the sick and promoting wellbeing. No doctor or healthcare provider is a death expert. Asking a physician to assist in suicide is like asking the bus driver to run over the school children he was entrusted to protect. Life itself is so fragile, and tragically, as we know from all the gun violence, there are other ways to end a life besides involving a doctor- the one person whose job it is to ensure patient protection and physical well-being. We should be extinguishing suffering and pain not life. I entreat you all to reject this bill and protect the patient. I am adamantly opposed to this bill.

Janet D Conway MD

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