



Compassion & Choices Arizona

Compassion in Dying - End of Life Choices

Previous Issues at: www.choicesarizona.org

May 2009

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

RALLY FOR “END OF LIFE OPTIONS, RIGHT TO KNOW”

We let the Arizona State Legislature know that Arizona residents are serious about passing a California-type “End of life Options, Right to Know” bill when we rallied at the capitol on January 29, 2009.



Billie Stockl
Board President,
Compassion & Choices
Arizona, addresses the
crowd at the state capitol

This year’s rally was held to support **Senate Bill (SB) 1311, titled “End of Life Options, Right to Know”** introduced by State Senator Linda Lopez.

For those of you who want to surf the web, the bill appears in its entirety is on our web page at www.choicesarizona.org. This year, no bills are to be heard in our legislature until the budget has been passed, so we’ll keep you informed on the outcome of the bill. For those of you who prefer to read hard copy, following are the highlights of SB 1311.



Loretta Lande
Vice President of the
Compassion & Choices Arizona
Board, tells her story
at the Rally

A. If a healthcare provider makes a diagnosis that a patient has a terminal illness, the healthcare provider, upon the patient’s request, shall provide the patient with comprehensive information and counseling regarding legal end of

life care options. If a terminally ill patient is in a healthcare institution, the healthcare provider, or medical director of the healthcare institution, if the patient’s healthcare provider is not available, may refer the patient to a Hospice provider or private or public agencies and community-based organizations that specialize in end of life



David Bradley,
Arizona State
Representative
District 29, Tucson,
and supporter of SB 1311
speaks at the Rally

care case management and consultation to receive comprehensive information and counseling regarding legal end of life options.

B. If the patient indicates a desire to receive the information and counseling, the comprehensive information shall include, at a minimum, the following:



Carolyn Lieder
a hospice nurse who
practices in an inpatient
facility in Chicago, speaks to
an attentive audience.

1. Hospice care at home or in a healthcare setting
2. A prognosis with and without the continuation of disease-targeted treatment
3. The patient’s right to refusal of or withdrawal from life-sustaining treatment
4. The patient’s right to continue to pursue disease-targeted treatment, with or without concurrent palliative care.

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 - Bill Haley
(520) 399-2130
Email: karebil@live.com

Northwest 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: C&C Arizona Toll Free 1-877-535-3600

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

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

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

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

Questions, please call Billie at
1-877-535-3600, or check our website
<http://www.choicesarizona.org>

STATE LEADERSHIP

COMPASSION & CHOICES ARIZONA BOARD

President: Billie Stockl, Sierra Vista
Vice President: Loretta Lande, Metro Phoenix
Secretary: Vacant
Treasurer: Stanley Steinberg, Tucson
Members: Bill Haley, Green Valley
Bob Wallace, Sun Lakes
Cherie Esser, Tucson
David Brandt-Erichsen, Tucson
Irene Weitzman, Sun City West
Margot Champagne, Prescott

Compassion & Choices Arizona Medical Advisory Group

Dr. Robert H. Furman
Dr. Harvey Turner

Newsletter Editor: Deborah Darby
Please send information to
peacefulpassing@msn.com

NEED A SPEAKER?

If you would like to have a member of the Compassion & Choices Arizona Board come and speak at one of your public meetings, please contact us at 1-877-535-3600. Billie Stockl will answer your call. She's one of the board members (among other members) who have agreed to be available to any chapter that calls. Billie is also available to speak at retirement facilities, schools and any interested group!

COMPASSION & CHOICES RELEASED THESE “SEVEN PRINCIPLES”

...designed to guide healthcare providers and policy-makers to place every patient's personal values at the center of end of life care. These Seven Principles may be of assistance to lawmakers and policy experts in remembering what's important, i.e., the patient's wishes and concerns. Compassion & Choices urges our healthcare system and its providers to put the patient first.

Seven Principles for Patient Centered End-of-Life Care

- 1. Focus.** End of life care should focus on the patient's life and current experience.
- 2. Self-determination.** Individuals vary in their tolerance for pain and suffering.
- 3. Autonomy.** Decisions about end-of-life care begin and end with the autonomous patient.
- 4. Personal Beliefs.** Patients should feel empowered to make decisions based on their own deeply held values and beliefs, without fear of moral condemnation or political interference.
- 5. Informed Consent.** Patients must have comprehensive, candid information in order to make valid decisions and give informed consent.
- 6. Balance.** Patients should feel empowered to make decisions based on their own assessment of the balance between quantity and quality of life.
- 7. Notice.** Patients must have early, forthright and complete notice of health care providers' institutional or personal policies or beliefs that could impact their treatment wishes at the end of life.

WE RESPECTFULLY ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT AT OUR 2010 RALLY AT THE CAPITOL

By Billie Stockl, President
Board of Directors
Compassion & Choices Arizona

In January 2010, Senator Linda Lopez will again be submitting a bill that she has championed for Compassion & Choices Arizona from 2004-2008, a bill for physician aid in dying.

Senator Lopez and Compassion & Choices AZ need your show of support by attending these annual rallies! With the make-up of the Arizona legislature, it will take time, but we will not give up our fight to have an Oregon-type bill made available to the residence of Arizona. As long as we will support her efforts, Senator Lopez will champion our cause.

If we give up, it will send a message to our legislature that they have won, and that we finally gave up. I, for one, will NOT give up. Like many of you who will read this, I was the caregiver to someone I loved dearly. I had to watch my husband suffer a horrible, painful death; for this reason, I will not give up.

Past rallies have been good, but in 2010, please support our cause by attending the rally. With our funds, we provide bus transportation to the capitol. In the past, we have limited our lease of bus transportation to two locations. If the ridership is great enough, we will add additional locations.

We need to show our legislature that we are large in number, we are determined and we will NOT give up until we have an Oregon-type physician aid in dying law for the citizens of Arizona!

WASHINGTON STATE LEGALIZES PHYSICIAN ASSISTED DEATH

As of Thursday March 5, terminally ill patients in Washington State can invoke the new physician assisted death law called the Death with Dignity Act.

Washington's new law, which allows them to ask for a lethal prescription from their doctor if they have less than six months to live, is based on a similar one introduced in Oregon eleven years ago.

Like the Oregon act, Washington's new law requires that any patient asking for a lethal prescription must be a resident of the state, be at least 18 years old, be declared mentally competent to make the request and have two doctors certify that he or she has six months or less to live, according to the *Seattle Times*.

The patient's request must be put into writing and witnessed by two people. They must also make two oral requests 15 days apart, the so-called "15 day waiting period".

Groups who support the initiative say that the new law gives people another option and helps them to feel in control of the dying process and thereby preserves their dignity.

Groups who are against the initiative say that the reporting requirements aren't strong enough and there should be stricter safeguards to make sure patients are offered enough end of life options, including pain management.

MONTANA DOCS RELUCTANT TO ASSIST IN PATIENT DEATHS

This story is excerpted from an article that originally appeared in the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*

While a district court judge has ruled it is a right protected in the state constitution, life-ending treatment has proved elusive for some patients in Montana. But death with dignity advocates say that right is being frustrated by the unwillingness among doctors to be of assistance to patients in dying.

In December, District Judge Dorothy McCarter found that physician-assisted death is protected by the privacy provisions of the Montana State Constitution. With that ruling and no laws on the books in the state restricting physician-assisted death, Montana is considered to have the most liberal rights in regards to life-ending treatment.

The Montana Medical Association adopted a policy following the ruling that states the group "does not condone the deliberate act of precipitating the death of a patient."

**"I hope that physicians have heard about the decision, but we don't actually know. My suspicion is that physicians either are not aware of the decision or are still feeling at risk."
Kathryn Tucker**

Kathryn Tucker, Director of Legal Affairs for the National Organization of Compassion & Choices pinned the hesitancy for some doctors to authorize the medications on ignorance of the ruling, or fear.

OPINION:

A YOUNG VOICE SPEAKS OUT

by Christine Shall

I am a Social Work student at ASU West. One of my assignments this semester is to engage in an advocate activity regarding palliative care or other social justice issue related to death. I am a supporter of legislation SB1311 and I have chosen this issue for my activity.

In addition to writing (a) a letter to the editor (150-200 words) and (b) a communication to legislators, I will engage in advocacy through action, such as carrying a petition for an initiative and educating people about it or volunteering for a campaign.

I wanted to let you know about the website I made for the activity and that I have added a link to Compassion & Choices.

The more I learn about this issue the more I see how ridiculous our health system is, and how desperately it needs to change for the better. Thank God for you and people like you who dedicate their lives to this important cause.

We thank you, Christine, for your passionate support of our effort! Please join your local Chapter and tell your friends!

Christine's excellent website
*"Support Senate Bill 1311
End of Life Options"*
can be found at www.tinyurl.com/sb1311
with a link to Compassion & Choices
toward the bottom of the page

I Wonder WHY...

By Irene Weitzman, Northwest Valley

This short article is the result of my disappointment resulting from the turnout during the January 29 rally in Phoenix

Why didn't you come to the rally at the House of Representatives building in Phoenix on January 29?

Why didn't you come to support Senator Linda Lopez's presentation of her bill, SB1311, "End of Life Options, Right to Know?" Why didn't you come "en masse" to let the legislators know that we are serious and want that bill passed? A similar bill was even signed by the Republican Governor in California.

Was your absence the result of insufficient notice? Yet the newsletter mentioned the date well in advance, months even. Couldn't you plan that trip another day? Get tickets, another day? Ask your relative if another day was possible? Did you legs hurt and you decided to stay home? Well some others came and sat holding their death with dignity balloons. Some brought their lawn chairs to sit upon, some came with walkers. Those with ability to walk...did you forget? Yet you were reminded by emails and telephone calls.

Assuming you support the mission of Compassion & Choices by paying your dues and contributions, did you feel that is enough? But the legislators don't know that.

You will have another opportunity the third or fourth week of January, 2010 to support Senator Lopez and her two bills: a Physician Aid in Dying bill and End of Life Options, Right to Know. **You have many months of advance notice, don't miss this opportunity to show your support! Hope to see you there!**

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: www.compassionandchoices.org

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

NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED TWICE A YEAR

Our newsletter will be published in April and October from now on. Please be sure to send in any information you'd like to see published, including updates on your meetings, your opinions and your ideas!

**To have your voice heard, send your information, ideas, comments or essays to:
peacefulpassing@msn.com.**



Deb Darby

EDITOR'S CORNER...*She's Baaaaaaack!*

SURPRISE! Now that the newsletter will be published just twice a year, I have agreed to continue to be the Editor. I am grateful for the support of the Board of Directors as we strive to make this newsletter informative, easy to read and timely.

But I rely on Chapter Leaders and the membership in general to make sure we know what's going on locally. So please send me your information about upcoming Chapter Meetings (and, please, a quick report — with photos?! — of how it went) at peacefulpassing@msn.com.

BOOK REVIEW

A Hastened Death by Self-Denial of Food and Drink

by Boudewijn Chabot, MD, PhD
(Amsterdam, 2008, 64 pages).

Reviewed by: David Brandt-Erichsen

This small book offers the most complete discussion to date on the subject of what in this country is generally called Voluntary Stopping of Eating and Drinking (VSED), and which the author refers to as Stopping Eating and Drinking (STED). Dr. Chabot studied 110 cases of VSED in the Netherlands and his book constitutes a practical guide to VSED for both patients and health care givers.

If water intake is stopped completely rather than tapered off, VSED takes about two weeks to result in death by dehydration, and death is almost certain within 16 days. The discomfort involved is generally mild but of course varies with individuals. Hunger usually disappears after a couple of days. After a week of fasting, metabolic byproducts generally cause a sense of well-being, even elation. Electrolyte imbalance (especially potassium loss) eventually results in cardiac arrest during sleep.

The bowels should be cleansed at the start of VSED to avoid gastric distress later on. The most important comfort measure is adequate mouth care. The mouth can be kept moist with small amounts of ice chips, sugar-free popsicles (called “ice lollys” in the book), gum (must be sugar-free), or saliva substitutes. The latter come in sprays, gels, or lozenges, but no brands are mentioned in the book (check www.dentist.net/drymouth.asp). The author recommends trying these first so you know what kind you would prefer to have on hand.

VSED itself generally does not require pain medication but the patient's other health problems may require it for palliative care. Benzodiazepines (such as Valium) may be prescribed for anxiety if needed.

This book is highly recommended to anyone who wants to be ready in case you might wish to choose this option when your time comes. You won't find this book at Borders or Amazon. The only way to order it is to send a check for \$15 (includes shipping) payable to Hemlock Society of San Diego and send it to Faye Girsh, 7811 Eads Ave. #108, La Jolla, CA 92037



Compassion & Choices AZ
P. O. Box 12126, Tucson, AZ 85732

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
TUCSON, ARIZONA
PERMIT NO 792

Address Service Requested

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 that we will prepare and mail to your constituency!

Send info to: info@choicesarizona.org

Mark Your Calendars!

COCHISE COUNTY CHAPTER OF COMPASSION & CHOICES ARIZONA will meet at 10:30 AM on Saturday, May 16, 2009 in the Mona Bishop Room of the Sierra Vista Library, 2600 E. Tacoma Street. Our speaker will be Kathleen Heard, Director, Southeastern AZ Governments Organization (SEAGO), Area Agency on Aging, who will discuss the differences between Cochise Aging and Social Services, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), and the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS). The meeting is free and open to the public. For further information call Billie toll free at 1-877-535-3600, or local Sierra Vista phone number 520-378-2603.

COCHISE COUNTY CHAPTER OF COMPASSION & CHOICES ARIZONA, Saturday, August 8, 2009. Meeting will begin at 10:30 AM. Speaker to be announced later.

STATE CONFERENCE OF COMPASSION & CHOICES ARIZONA Saturday, November 7, 2009 at the Grace Inn, 10831 South 51st Street, Phoenix, AZ 85044. We encourage every member to be sure to reserve November 7 on your calendar, as this year's conference promises to be worthwhile. We'll be providing final details by separate correspondence when all the particulars have been finalized. *Come and meet other like-minded individuals from the state of Arizona! Invite a friend! Treat a friend!*

COCHISE COUNTY CHAPTER OF COMPASSION & CHOICES ARIZONA, Saturday, November 14, 2009. Meeting will begin at 10:30 AM. Speaker to be announced later.