

# MARYLAND

## AGAINST PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

Legislation was introduced earlier this year in the Maryland General Assembly (HB 1021/SB 676), allowing doctors to legally prescribe lethal medication at the request of a patient who has received a terminal diagnosis and been deemed mentally competent. The legislation, referred to by its proponents as “death with dignity” is unnecessary, flawed, and lacking safeguards.

Although the General Assembly did not advance the proposal this year, we fully expect the bill to be re-filed in 2016 and for proponents to make an even more aggressive effort to pass it.

### **Who Supports This Legislation?**

Supporters of this bill are from a national advocacy organization called “Compassion and Choices”, formerly the “Hemlock Society.” They are using their significant financial means for a national effort to legalize physician assisted suicide in states all across the country. As an example of the lengths they’ll go to pass these bills, they have reportedly spent over \$5 million thus far in 2015, in an attempt to pass one physician assisted suicide bill in California alone.

### **Why Should You Oppose this Bill?**

The proposed legislation poses a safety risk to patients. Our coalition is opposing this bill because:

1. The opportunity for abuse or something going wrong is too high: no doctor, nurse, or independent witness is required to be present when the lethal dose is taken.
2. Patients will pick up their lethal prescriptions at their local pharmacies.
3. There is no requirement to notify family members that you plan on taking lethal medication.
4. Doctors are not required to screen patients for depression before authorizing physician assisted suicide.
5. Accurately predict a six-month terminal diagnosis is next to impossible – even doctors admit that it’s simply an educated guess.

### **Who Opposes This Bill?**

Disability advocates, members of the medical community, patient advocates, and religious organizations have joined together to advocate against physician assisted suicide legislation in Maryland.

### **How Can You Help?**

Visit [www.StopAssistedSuicideMD.org](http://www.StopAssistedSuicideMD.org) to learn more about the effort to defeat this legislation and find ways that you can help – including joining the coalition, contacting your legislator, and sharing this information with your friends and family.

## **Questions?**

**Web:** [www.StopAssistedSuicideMD.org](http://www.StopAssistedSuicideMD.org)

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