

**TESTIMONY**

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Center for Hospice Care Southeast CT

**March 17, 2014**

**Opposing Raised House Bill 5326**

**AAC Compassionate Aid in Dying for the Terminally Ill Patients**

Senator Gerrantano, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Lorraine Moon and I am a hospice nurse for Center for Hospice Care in Norwich CT.

**I am testifying in OPPOSITION to Raised Bill 5326 An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid In Dying for the Terminally Ill Patients.**

Terminally ill patients have choices

Terminally ill patients do not die in pain

Terminally ill patients deserve support for themselves and their families

All of the above are available to patients and their families in hospice care

**Terminally ill patients enrolled in hospice care are given choices in end of life care:** choices regarding their Advance Directives, where they want to die, and what treatments they do or do not want.

**Terminally ill patients do not die in pain.** Not all terminally ill patients are on pain medications. There are many kinds of pain: physical, emotional and spiritual. Hospice care addresses all of these. Spiritual counselors and social workers are part of the team that deals with these issues. If there is physical pain, hospice has the expertise in dealing with this. Yes, we use narcotics as needed, but only as needed and prescribed by a physician. With the use of pain medications, patients are able to experience quality of life because they are pain free. They are able to be with their families, visit with friends and go out and enjoy the things that are important to them. The goal of hospice care is not to medicate patients to the point that they are unable to experience life but to enable them to experience quality at the end of their life.

**Support is available for terminally ill patients.** Terminally ill patients deserve a team to assist them at the end of their life. Assisted suicide should not have to be an option. The Hospice team of experts, physicians, nurses, clergy, aides, social workers, bereavement counselors and volunteers provide for the physical, emotional, and spiritual issues of patients and their families at the end of life. This team works with the patient and their family to assist the patient to live their life to the fullest and die with dignity. Hospice care provides for support to the families for 13 months after the death of the patient.

Instead of legalizing physician assisted suicide we need to provide more education and access to hospice care to terminally ill patients and their families.

Thank you and if you have any further questions, please contact me at [lmoon@hospicesect.org](mailto:lmoon@hospicesect.org).