

Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

From: Sally Murray <ssnamurray@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2015 7:21 AM
To: JudTestimony
Cc: Glass, Jennifer
Subject: End of life care testimonial

I'm writing today to express my views on the issue of end of life choice, and submit the following testimony to be considered during the public hearing on March 18, 2015.

I am no expert but in my limited experience, terminally ill patients are forced to exist well past the point of reason. I have seen loved ones curled in a fetal position for several days, unable to ingest nutrition or to utter anything stronger than a moan, until they finally succumb; this is a cruel and ugly way to end one's life. DNRs are routinely ignored, leaving patients and their families feeling powerless and often inflicting further trauma on people who are already in terrible pain.

The terminal patients I have known have all eventually used the phrase, "I'm ready;" in each case this moment has come during the last hours or day of life. At that time, presuming that defeat has been conceded by both the primary physician and the competent patient, to allow a human being to continue in agony is the worst sort of crime, the intentional infliction of pain. If my dog was in permanent pain due to a terminal condition, I would consider it a kindness – and my responsibility as caretaker and companion – to end that pain. If a beloved human experienced that same sort of terminal agony I would be forced to sit by the sidelines, able to do nothing but hold the person's hand and look on in horror as starvation and suffering overcame my loved one's last defenses.

The difference between surrendering in fear and torment and deciding to leave the world gently and of one's own volition should be clear to anyone who has watched a loved one's final hours. We all wish for a peaceful death; to deny it to someone who is facing it full-on, willingly and with no hope for life is monstrous beyond description.

Palliative care is the treatment of pain: it's a vital part of the treatment of terminally ill patients and treatment options should include the permanent end to a person's suffering, should it be the wish of that person to die peacefully when all other options have been exhausted.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sally L. Murray