

From Susan Israel, MD

Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The potential dangers of the provisions of HB 7015 must be the overriding concern. Perhaps some other way can be found for people to take a pill for suicide without institutionalizing a process that will distort and compromise the practice of medicine.

Medical providers have a clear goal to treat illness and make people more comfortable. In contrast, it is quite murky to give an opinion, on how long a person will live and their mental competency in the context of severe medical illness, in order to support a patient's taking their own life.

End of life care discussions are encouraged as they should be, but where will the line be drawn between reasonable choices and pressure to die, as the pill would now be available? Certainly it would be more cost effective for the insurance companies to pay for a lethal pill than pay for the longer term health care. And as it is, there is discussion that the last six months of life are the most costly for Medicare.

It will be difficult for the disabled, elderly and very ill not to feel a burden to their families and to society as they are costing so much money, when they could more easily solve the problem by taking a pill.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to express concerns.