



The Truth about Assisted Suicide

MYTH	FACT
Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) is for patients who suffer from excruciating and unbearable pain	Most patients' concerns are about dignity and quality of life – not intractable pain. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •2010 Oregon Dept. of Health Report on concerns of patients who requested PAS: Loss of autonomy (93.8%), decreasing ability to participate in enjoyable activities (93.8%), loss of dignity (78.5%)¹
PAS is about patients' rights, freedom, and personal choice; opponents are busybodies	Even pro-choice progressives, like Ted Kennedy's widow, fought PAS in MA in 2012 ²
Only people who want the best for a patient are involved	An heir or beneficiary can be a main "witness" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •In the United States alone, 500,000+ older adults are believed to be abused or neglected each year³ •Case of Kate Cheney: Cheney was in early stages of dementia. Primary physician and a psychiatrist believed she was being coached by her daughter; another doctor was found who ignored them⁴
Ensuring that the patient obtains two doctors' approval is a sufficient precaution	In practice, "doctor shopping" occurs and primary physicians have been ignored ⁵
PAS has widespread support	Only three states have legalized PAS; over 100 proposals in more than 25 states have failed ⁶
Doctors administer the lethal drugs	Doctors prescribe, but don't have to be present; anyone could administer ⁷
Patients are not encouraged or pressured to choose assisted suicide	The state of Oregon has informed patients that it would pay for lethal drugs, but not for treatment prescribed by their doctor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cases of Barbara Wagner & Randy Stroup⁸
Opponents support extraordinary measures for keeping patients alive against their will	Opponents support patients' right to refuse unwanted treatment ("let nature take its course"); there is a difference
With strong safeguards, there have been no cases of abuse	Numerous cases of abuse have occurred. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Wendy Melcher case: overdose of drugs administered unbeknownst to doctor. Five other cases involve individuals who were killed via an illegal overdose. None of these cases have been prosecuted⁹

1. "Oregon's Death with Dignity Act-2010." *Oregon Health Authority*. <http://public.health.oregon.gov>.
2. Kennedy, Victoria Reggie. "Question 2 Insults Kennedy's Memory." *Cape Cod Times*, 27 October 2012. <http://www.capecodonline.com>.
3. "Prevent Elder Abuse and Neglect." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*.
4. Marker, Rita L. "Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide & Health Care Decisions-Part 1." *Patients Rights Council*. <http://www.patientsrightscouncil.org>.
5. Hendin, Herbert & Kathleen Foley. "Physician-Assisted Suicide in OR: A Medical Perspective." *Michigan Law Review* 21 May 2008, <http://michiganlawreview.org>.
6. "Attempts to Legalize Euthanasia/Assisted-Suicide in the United States." *Patients Rights Council*. <http://www.patientsrightscouncil.org/site/failed-attempts-usa/>
7. Dore, Margaret K, Esq. "Physician-Assisted Suicide: A Recipe for Elder Abuse and the Illusion of Personal Choice." *The Vermont Bar Journal*. <https://www.vtbar.org>.
8. Smith, Wesley. "'Right to Die' Can Become 'Duty to Die.'" *The Telegraph*, 20 February, 2009. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk>.
9. "Some Oregon Assisted Suicide Abuses and Complications." *Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund*. <http://dredf.org>.