

TALK TO LEGISLATURE REGARDING PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE
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When my son was 41 he was diagnosed with ALS. He realized the difficult time ahead would end in his death. He struggled. As he shared the important and difficult experiences of his life, his friends were encouraged to address their own life struggles. Word spread — more friends visited coming from childhood years — and from the Northwest where he attended University and worked.

As he physically wasted, his inner strength became more manifest — especially in his graceful acceptance of what he was enduring — and in the sharing of his life with others. He was cared for by those who loved him and valued each moment of his life. He was determined to live his life to its fullest - but was not afraid to die. He wanted no artificial life support.

His shortness of breath became severe. He was taken to the hospital where a number of friends just arriving from the Northwest joined us. Our family remained with him. He died peacefully the next morning. His disease had lasted six months.

A well intentioned friend offered to take him to Oregon for assisted suicide in effect saying, "Your life is of no value now," Pat said no, he had his path.

Suicide totally devalues human life removing it's dignity. It isn't compassion. My son lived and died with dignity, - which is: - "The excellence that deserves recognition and praise in a person." One always has a choice to commit suicide and no physician is needed but this Bill re-defines suicide to dignify it.

Laws with such words as, — ***Death with Dignity, or Aid-in-Dying*** are a ploy, a political marketing tool - designed to sell lawmakers and the public the comforting -idea - of physicians' tacit approval of suicide assisted by a lethal prescription. The physician, a healer in a healing profession, was never meant to become an instrument of death, in effect saying, "your life is of no value."

Remember, physical and emotional suffering of terminally ill patients can be controlled medically.

A prognosis is only a forecast of the likely course of a disease: *it is very difficult to make an accurate prognosis.* In 2000 I had radical surgery for metastatic bladder cancer. My prognosis was 3-6 months though 20% live 2 years. That was over 15 years ago.

A family member treated for an inoperable brain cancer was given a prognosis of 6 months to 2 years with some surviving longer. She lived an active life with her family and friends until her death 7 years later. Prognoses are good flags for getting one's affairs in order but are not the final word. Thank you for your time.