



Wisconsin Update

Newsletter of Compassion & Choices of Wisconsin

Vol. 21, No. 1 Supporting the option of aid-in-dying for the terminally ill March 2011

Death with Dignity Remains the Law in Montana: Legislators Decline to Repeal or Regulate Aid in Dying

By Matt Volz

(Mr. Volz writes for the Associated Press. On February 20, 2011, his report appeared in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. It has been edited here.)

HELENA, Mont. Montana legislators had been asked to choose between two proposed bills in creating a physician aid in dying law: ban the practice altogether or create regulations for doctors and terminally ill patients to follow.

Now it appears they'll do neither, leaving the state in the same legal posture that has existed since the Montana Supreme Court ruling effectively legalizing the practice more than a year ago.

Both bills were tabled in committee this week, all but killing the measures for the 2011 session—and likely for at least the next two years. The final nail was hammered Thursday when Sen. Greg Hinkle attempted to bypass the judiciary committee and bring his bill to ban aid in dying to the full Senate.

His colleagues overwhelmingly voted him down, 35-15.

Either measure conceivably could be brought back this session, but the sponsor of the bill to regulate aid in dying said he believes that

would be highly unlikely.

“That ship has sailed,” said Democratic Sen. Anders Blewett, a Great Falls attorney.

The advocacy group Compassion & Choices has said more than one patient died with the aid of a physician since the Supreme Court decision, but declined to say how many, where, when and which doctors participated.

Compassion & Choices, which backed Blewett's bill, said that while having a law clarifying the practice would be helpful, there is no question that the court's ruling legalized aid in dying.

Blewett agreed with advocates that terminally ill patients will still be able to end their lives despite the Legislature's inaction.

“The situation we have is not ideal for physicians or patients with terminal conditions but the current system will work for people who need relief at the end of their lives,” he said.

April Membership Meeting

The meeting will be held in Madison at the First Unitarian Society on Saturday, April 23, 2011 at 9:30 A.M. See the meeting notice on page 5. Come to the meeting and bring a friend.

Visit www.compassionandchoiceswisc.org for the latest information regarding end-of-life issues.

C&C of WI will be at the Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Alliance For Retired Americans (WARA)

On March 21, C&C of WI will be an exhibitor at the annual meeting of the WARA to be held at the Concourse Hotel and Convention Center in Madison. The WARA was launched nationally in 2001 and in Wisconsin in 2005 by a coalition of AFL-CIO affiliated unions and community based organizations dedicated to economic and social justice. C&C of WI members who will be on

hand to discuss Compassion & Choices and end of life issues with convention goers include Jim Allen, John Eliason, Jim Greenwald, Warren Olsen and Susan Wester.

Timothy Quill will be among the Speakers at the UW Bioethics Symposium on April 7, 2011 in Madison

The title of the symposium is: *Physician Assisted Dying: Patient Right or Wrongful Death?*

It will be held at the UW Health Sciences Learning Center, 750 Highland Ave., Auditorium 1306 from 1:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. Seating is open and admission is free.

Timothy Quill, M.D., has long been associated with the right to die movement. Other speakers include Margaret Battin, PhD, who has written on the subject of aid in dying and Yale Kamisar, LLB, who teaches at the University of Michigan Law School.

A panel composed of other speakers will address the topic: *Terminal Sedation and Active Euthanasia: What are the Boundaries?*

On the same day, April 7, Bruce Wilson M.D. will be a speaker at a bioethics conference in Oconomowoc.

Dr. Wilson practices cardiology in Milwaukee and was a close friend of Dr. and Mrs. Daniel Gute, who took their own lives. He is the afternoon keynote speaker and will lead a breakout session on the Gute Case.

The conference will be held at the Olympia Resort & Conference Center in Oconomowoc from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

A brochure containing other details is available at http://www.yourfaithinaction.org/files/Final_Brochure.pdg.

**Compassion & Choices of Wisconsin
Board of Directors**

President
Susan Wester(608) 442-1527
(smwester@mac.com)

Vice President—Speakers Bureau
John Eliason(608) 827-0873
(jweliason@aol.com)

Secretary
Dawn Stucki..... (608) 849-8078
(destucki@tds.net)

Treasurer
Betty Dovenbarger.....(608) 833-2774
(bdoven@charter.net)

Membership
Dick Grum(608) 873-8277
(dickgrum2@yahoo.com)

Member-At-Large
Karen Deiro..... (414-282-3249)
(kdeiro@aol.com)

Newsletter Editor
Jim Greenwald(608) 233-7867
(cantlongreenwald@tds.net)

Program
Warren Olsen(608) 845-7972
(wolsen@chorus.net)

Member-At-Large
Anne Zimmerman(608) 745-1530

Report on Nov. Meeting: Keith Nevitt Reviewed Parts of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act That Went Into Effect in 2010.

Keith Nevitt is a field representative in the office of Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin. The following are some of the provisions he discussed.

I. A number of the provisions of the Act, some of which are referred to below, became law on September 23, 2010 and apply to all private insurance plans.

a. Prohibits all employer plans and new plans in the individual market from denying coverage to children with pre-existing conditions.

b. Bans all health plans from dropping people from coverage when they get sick.

c. Prohibits all health plans from placing lifetime caps on coverage.

d. Tightly restricts the use of annual limits by all employer plans in the individual market, to ensure access to needed care.

e. Requires new private plans to cover preventive services with no co-payments

and with preventive services being exempt from deductibles.

f. Requires plans to allow young people up to their 26th birthday to remain on their parents' insurance policy, at the parents' choice.

II. Two provisions that became effective in the

beginning of 2011 are aimed at ensuring that health care premiums are paid out to the providers of medical services rather than remaining with insurance companies. The Act:

a. Requires all health plans to put more of your premiums into your care, and less into profits, CEO compensation, etc. This medical loss ratio requires plans in the individual market to spend 80 percent of premiums on medical services, and plans in the large group market to spend 85 percent. Insurers that don't meet these thresholds must provide rebates to policyholders.

b. Creates a grant program to support states in requiring health insurance companies to submit justification for requesting premium increases.



“It was just supposed to lift him gently into an upright position.”

buys in health insurance policies. Government subsidies will be given to low and moderate income individuals on a sliding scale to make health insurance affordable.

III. The Act contemplates that by 2014 Health Insurance Exchanges will have been set up where employers and individuals can shop for the best

Honor Roll of Supporters Who Gave to the December 2010 Fund Raising Appeal

Thirty-five (35) supporters responded to the appeal contributing a total of \$3,263. Contributors include:

Jim Allen	Madison
Richard and Doris Bibler	Pewaukee
Rev. Harold Boettcher	Stanley
Kristen & Jeffrey Brown	Chippewa Falls
Shirley J. Buechner	Hudson
Frederick J. Davis	Madison
Janet and James DiMarco	Racine
Susan DeWitt Davie	Green Bay
Melita L. Downing	Janesville
Miles and Amy Epstein	Madison
Paul Fishkin	Madison
Paul and Wendy Greeney	Mequon
Jim Greenwald	Madison
Ralph and Peggy Hudson	Eau Claire
Beverly J. Katter	Milwaukee
Laurelle Lubotsky	Greenbush
Rose B. Smith	Madison
Barbara Spierer	Madison
Judy C. Stevens	Wausau
Cindy Van Thiel	Appleton
Anne C. Zimmerman	Portage

Our thanks to all of you who contributed at this time so we can continue to fight the good fight to make the dying process less dreadful and more humane.

Death Notice

Dr. Russell F. Lewis M.D. who served as president of the Wisconsin Medical Society from 1980 to 1981 die on February 3, 2011. He was 93 years old. His sermon appeared in the Wis. Med. Alumni Ass'n Qtrly. in 2002.

A Sermon on Death With Dignity by Dr. Russell F. Lewis, M.D.

Almost all of you know that my wife Ellen died recently of ALS. She went through months of misery, but not because of pain. The misery came because her brilliant mind found itself trapped in a body that soon could not stand or walk. Then she could not raise her arms to write or even feed herself, and finally she could not talk so communication became impossible. Neither she nor we could do a thing about it.

Two years earlier Ellen was diagnosed with lung cancer, for which she received chemotherapy in 2001. She worried about a painful end and we often talked about Oregon's law concerning assisted suicide. The "Death with Dignity Act" allows terminally ill Oregon residents to obtain lethal medications from a physician and then voluntarily self-administer them. The Act specifically prohibits euthanasia, where a physician or other person directly administers a medication to end another's life.

As a devout Catholic, Ellen was adamantly opposed to the idea. She never faltered during her illness, and I was proud of her for her belief. She had every right to make and keep to that decision. But I felt—and still feel—that the Oregon law is a step forward. And it is only the beginning.

In fact, I also take a positive stance on euthanasia, a subject that is even more taboo. This has no bearing on Ellen's problems, but relates to my mother, an equally intelligent lady who had what was then called senile dementia, probably what is known today as Alzheimer's.

Mother was in a nursing home for the last four years of her life. For almost all of that

(Continued on page 6.)

Notice of April Meeting of Compassion & Choices of Wisconsin

Members, friends and the public are invited to a meeting featuring

John Hendrick

Mr. Hendrick is an attorney with the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups (CWAG). He will speak on the topic: **Legislative Update, including End of Life Issues.**

Saturday, April 23, 2011
Courtyard ABC Room, New Building
First Unitarian Society
900 University Bay Drive
Madison, WI

9:30 A.M. Coffee and conversation
9:45 Announcements
10:00 Program

If you need directions to the meeting or a ride, call Betty at 608 833 2774 or Jim at 608 233 7867.

Compassion & Choices Membership Form

Yes! I want to join Compassion & Choices * ___ \$45 Individual ___ \$60 Couple ___ \$450 Life Member ___ \$600 Life Couple Member	
<i>Please supply complete address:</i> Name/s _____ Address _____ City _____ State Zip _____ Telephone () _____ E-Mail _____	Make Checks Payable to and Send To: Compassion & Choices P.O. Box 101810 Denver, CO 80250-1810 Or Call: 1-800-247-7421 Visa or MasterCard accepted Dues are not tax deductible
* The payment of dues includes your membership in Compassion & Choices of Wisconsin . You are invited to call 1-800-247-7421 if you cannot afford the \$45 membership. Every effort will be made to accommodate your circumstances.	

(Continued from page 4)

time, she knew nobody—not my dad, my brothers or other family members. She was a burden to the family in many ways, something this proud person never would have allowed if she were able to control the circumstances. Fortunately, we were able to handle the situation financially.

But my sermon is this: Why should Ellen or my mother or the attorney general or anybody else make such a decision for me. It seems to me that having the right to die, since it does not hurt any other person, should be legal. For those who are suffering, it should be an option for them to obtain relief.

Today with more money going to the military, we are seeing fewer dollars for many of the vital needs of our country’s people. In my opinion, we are wasting—and I mean

wasting—billions of dollars on prolonging life in many people who might rather not live, as those with advanced Alzheimer’s disease. With the increasing cost of medical care for these patients, no country will be able to afford to take care of them in the future. We should start paying attention to what is happening in Oregon and the Netherlands, where euthanasia is practiced, and learn from their experiences.

I feel we should face up to priorities and make children number one. Let’s put our resources into better education, improved housing and healthcare for everyone, especially the young. Why wait? Human rights has become an important movement in recent years. I hope that in addition to strongly pushing for policies allowing all people to live with dignity, human rights proponents would also seriously add the right to die with dignity.

See address label for your membership expiration date.

<http://www.compassionandchoiceswisc.org>

**Compassion & Choices of Wisconsin, Inc.
P.O. Box 7563, Madison Wisconsin, 53707**

