

MEDCHI, THE MARYLAND STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution 1-15

INTRODUCED BY: Garrett County Medical Society

SUBJECT: Physician-Assisted Suicide

1 Whereas, the American Medical Association has the following position on physician-assisted suicide:
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3 Opinion 2.211 - Physician-Assisted Suicide

4 Physician-assisted suicide occurs when a physician facilitates a patient's death by providing the
5 necessary means and/or information to enable the patient to perform the life-ending act (eg, the
6 physician provides sleeping pills and information about the lethal dose, while aware that the
7 patient may commit suicide).

8 It is understandable, though tragic, that some patients in extreme duress--such as those suffering
9 from a terminal, painful, debilitating illness--may come to decide that death is preferable to life.
10 However, allowing physicians to participate in assisted suicide would cause more harm than
11 good. Physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as
12 healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks.

13 Instead of participating in assisted suicide, physicians must aggressively respond to the needs of
14 patients at the end of life. Patients should not be abandoned once it is determined that cure is
15 impossible. Multidisciplinary interventions should be sought including specialty consultation,
16 hospice care, pastoral support, family counseling, and other modalities. Patients near the end of
17 life must continue to receive emotional support, comfort care, adequate pain control, respect for
18 patient autonomy, and good communication. (I, IV)

19 Issued June 1994 based on the reports "Decisions Near the End of Life," adopted June 1991, and
20 "Physician-Assisted Suicide," adopted December 1993 (JAMA. 1992; 267: 2229-33); Updated
21 June 1996.; therefore be it

22 Resolved, that MedChi will adopt the AMA policy on physician-assisted suicide as MedChi policy.
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25 As approved by the House of Delegates at its meeting on April 25, 2015.