



Massachusetts Legislators Shouldn't Take the "Bait and Switch" on Assisted Suicide

Assisted suicide proponents in Massachusetts are using bait to convince legislators to pass S. 1384/H. 2381 to legalize assisted suicide by claiming there are sufficient "safeguards" to protect patients from coercion and abuse. But, once the bait is taken and the law is passed, proponents switch to stripping away the "safeguards" just a few years later.

- A challenge filed in federal court in California would eliminate the requirement that the lethal drugs be self-administered which would result in euthanasia.¹ With lethal injection available in the home, vulnerable people would be at even greater risk of being killed without their consent.
- Proponents successfully removed by court settlement the requirement in Oregon that only residents of the state be eligible for lethal drugs by claiming it is unconstitutional.² Now, they are essentially asking Massachusetts legislators to support a bill with an unconstitutional residency requirement and are urging other legal states to remove their residency requirements.
- In Colorado, at least two patients in their early 30s with anorexia nervosa received lethal assisted suicide drugs.³ In Oregon, at least one patient with anorexia nervosa received the drugs.⁴ This is a broad expansion into mental illness, even though neither state through their elected officials or by public vote anticipated that the assisted suicide laws they passed would allow such expansion.
- The Massachusetts bills require a 15-day waiting period as did bills from other legal states. Since enacting assisted suicide laws, Oregon and California have drastically reduced their waiting periods to mere hours and Hawaii is following suit. The "safeguard" of a legitimate waiting period to allow patients to fully comprehend the enormity of the decision to end their lives is now claimed to be a "barrier".
- Physicians are often wrong in their prognoses that patients have only six months to live. In New Mexico, Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants are allowed to prescribe lethal drugs, even though Medicare prohibits them from qualifying patients for hospice which is also based on a six-month prognosis. Washington and Hawaii are two legal states now proposing to allow these less-qualified medical professionals to have prescription authority.

1. Shavelson M.D. et al v. California Department of Health Care Services • 2. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/amp/rcna21932> • 3. <https://jeatdisord.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40337-022-00548-3>
• 4. <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PROVIDERPARTNERRESOURCES/EVALUATIONRESEARCH/DEATHWITHDIGNITYACT/Documents/year24.pdf>