

3/9/15

Honorable Paul Seaton  
Committee on House Health and Social Services  
State Capitol, Room 102. Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Chairman Seaton,

Physicians, in their care of patients, must establish a physician-patient relationship based on mutual trust and respect to be able to render the best care to their patients. Centuries ago the physician Hippocrates wrote the Hippocratic Oath, which many of us took when we became physicians and guides us in the ethical practice of medicine. It states that when treating patients, physicians will "First do no harm." It goes on to state "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked nor suggest any such counsel."

Alaska HB 99, The Voluntary Termination of Life Law, is in direct conflict with the Hippocratic oath I took in 1984. When that oath is followed, it has protected the patient, physician, society and the family, and at the same time has committed doctors to compassion and human dignity. As a practicing Neurologist, I have cared for many patients throughout their lives, extending through to their last days of life. Their needs must be honored and their dignity preserved, which might require alleviation of pain, treatment of depression if it exists, as well as support for them and their families. Palliative or hospice care must be offered when appropriate.

Simply put, HB 99 is in direct opposition to the pledge physicians take to devote their lives to healing and to life. We believe laws sanctioning voluntary physician assisted suicide serves to undermine the foundation of the patient-physician relationship, which is grounded in the patient's trust that the physician is working wholeheartedly for the patient's health and welfare. Please do not allow HB 99 to leave your committee.

Sincerely,



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