

# 60 REASONS TO SUPPORT NEW YORK'S MEDICAL AID IN DYING ACT



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The co-founder of Hospice Buffalo (1978) and an internationally recognized palliative care provider, Dr. Milch supports medical aid-in-dying legislation.

Buffalo, New York



### Reason #11

***So that a physician can honor their compassionate and ethical commitment to a patient's autonomy.***

**S**uffering exists when what we are enduring serves no useful or meaningful purpose in the context of our lives. As a doctor, I am schooled in the treatment of disease. Diseases occur in organs; illnesses, however, occur in people.

As a physician, however skillful in symptom management and earnest in the supportive engagement of the patient and family, I cannot in conscience dictate when that point of suffering is reached for one with a terminal illness. Respect for individual patient autonomy and humane decency prohibits that paternalism. The Medical Aid in Dying Act would allow terminally ill New Yorkers to die without suffering in whatever way is consistent with their own values and beliefs.

History shows the evolution of permissible medical practices over time — dissection of the human body, birth control, transplantation, genome research. Similarly, decades of experience provide reassurance that, for those who choose to avail themselves of or provide it, medical aid in dying as legislatively authorized and

professionally overseen is not abused or abusive. Further, polling shows extensive lay and professional support of its practice. Based on history and evidence, I submit legislative authorization and decriminalization of that care is rational, responsible, and responsive.

Medical aid in dying is not merely, as some suggest, a reductive response to a complex problem. Rather, it is a further facilitation of a compassionate, ethical commitment to the patient's autonomy in determining that, beyond its length, in life at its end it is the absence of suffering that should be determinant — as decided and defined for each of us, by each of us.

**I urge your endorsement of that concept by passing this legislation without delay.**

To join our mission, email Amanda Cavanaugh at [acavanaugh@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:acavanaugh@compassionandchoices.org).

