



Our Mission. Our Work.



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After watching my husband, John, suffer terribly at the end of his life, I strongly believe in our right to choose when we die if our illness is beyond any hope of meaningful recovery. Compassion & Choices has worked diligently to advance patient autonomy at life's end and to improve end-of-life care for all of us. That's why I support Compassion & Choices' transformational leadership in achieving these vital goals.

– Diane Rehm

former host of NPR's nationally syndicated "The Diane Rehm Show"

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Compassion & Choices is the nation's oldest, largest and most active nonprofit working to improve care, expand options and empower everyone to chart their end-of-life journey. Since 1980, we have united over 450,000 supporters nationwide to become the preeminent leader of the end-of-life options movement.

How we live the final chapter of our lives, and how we die, are among the most deeply personal considerations of our lives. While it's our right to decide how much or how little treatment we want in our final days, our current healthcare system often ignores our wishes. Too often, healthcare providers fail to completely inform patients about the benefits and burdens of treatment options, preventing them from making fully informed decisions about their own care.

Compassion & Choices is leading the way in transforming our "one-size-fits-all" health-care system, which allows so much needless pain and suffering, into one that puts people in charge of their own end-of-life care. We envision a patient-driven system that honors an individual's values, religious views and spiritual beliefs. We are working toward an America that respects everyone's right to make their own end-of-life care decisions, in consultation with doctors and loved ones. We advocate for the full range of options to ensure everyone can die in peace and with dignity.



Compassion & Choices works at all levels of government and healthcare nationwide to transform end-of-life care, with informed, empowered patients leading the way.

Expanding Options

Despite sophisticated medical advances — and sometimes because of them — too many people suffer painful, drawn-out deaths against their wishes. At Compassion & Choices, we are advocating to expand end-of-life options and place control back in the hands of people. We have advocated the right to refuse unwanted medical treatment, legitimized the use of advance directives and secured people's right to receive the full measure of pain medication needed for relief.

Beginning with Oregon's Death With Dignity Act in 1994, Compassion & Choices has been instrumental in the passage of every medical aid-in-dying law in the nation. These laws allow terminally ill adults to request medication to die peacefully if they choose.

Our goal is for half of the U.S. population to live where medical aid in dying is open and accessible medical practice by 2023. We will not rest until every American has access to the full range of options at the end of life.

Protecting Those Options

Passing laws that authorize medical aid in dying is an incredible undertaking that requires the coordination and commitment of generous donors, selfless volunteers and tireless staff. But once we succeed, our work has just begun. Compassion & Choices vigilantly defends against attempts to undo our progress. This includes efforts to repeal legislation or file lawsuits seeking to place religious doctrine above a patient's expressed wishes.

Through comprehensive political, legal and educational efforts, Compassion & Choices protects our hard-earned rights to autonomy and liberty at life's ends.

Implementing the Law

Protected healthcare options have little value if those who need them don't know about them, don't understand them or can't access them. That's why Compassion & Choices leads robust implementation efforts to educate the public and healthcare community about medical aid in dying laws in authorized states. We encourage healthcare systems to adopt policies supportive of patient autonomy. We promote early implementation of newly enacted laws. And ultimately we integrate medical aid in dying into standard healthcare practice so people can access it through their own doctors and in their preferred medical setting.

Empowering Patients

Navigating the healthcare system can be daunting. Considering and discussing our own mortality is difficult for most. But both are crucial to ensuring we live as we wish during the final chapter of our lives and die in as much comfort as possible. Through our online Plan Your Care Resource Center and Truth in Treatment™ initiative, we provide tools, like our Dementia Provision, Diagnosis Decoder™ and Trust Card™, to help people communicate clearly with providers, take charge of their healthcare and achieve a peaceful death. The recent publication of *Finish Strong: Putting Your Priorities First at Life's End*, the new book by Compassion & Choices President Barbara Coombs Lee, provides an invaluable road map navigating the final stage of our lives. We also offer free, confidential telephone consultations with trained experts. This direct support, combined with our broader efforts to create lasting change, embody our fundamental goal: to empower everybody to chart their end-of-life journey.



To learn more, visit us at CompassionAndChoices.org
or call 800.247.7421

