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**Physicians are healers not killers**

The American College of Pediatricians (ACPeds) and the American Association of Prolife Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAPLOG) represent over 6,000 physicians and healthcare professionals who applaud the American Medical Association’s (AMA) current ban on physician assisted suicide and euthanasia. Together we urge the AMA's Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs (CEJA) to uphold its staunch opposition to these deadly practices. Assisting in or directly causing the death of our patients violates the long standing medical ethics principle of **first do no harm**. Killing is diametrically opposed to the role of physicians as healers. For these reasons, even the adoption of a "neutral stance" is unconscionable.

The prohibition against giving a poison dates from Hippocrates (ca 400 BC) and expresses a superior wisdom that physicians should not decide to actively end lives. Legalizing assisted suicide permits a two-party transaction abetting a suicidal act. Disguised as promoting patient autonomy, these laws permit physicians a very active role in ending lives.  
  
Assisted suicide laws, despite 2500 years of clearly articulated prohibition, presume the possibility of a benevolent role for physicians in "carrying out a patient's wishes" to be killed. Physicians are not mere vending machines or indentured servants obligated to provide whatever is requested regardless of the ethics involved. Doctors must make an independent judgment of the propriety of the act. Only a very twisted form of logic would argue that physicians' duty of beneficence makes us appropriate agents of suicide.

Dr. Donna Harrison, Executive Director of AAPLOG noted that physician assisted suicide fractures the trust between a doctor and her patient, and facilitates the exploitation of our most vulnerable patients.

*"When the physician tasked with healing also carries a license to kill, how can any patient trust her physician to place her health and best interests first?" She continued, "Also, the potential for abuse of our elderly and disabled patients increases since assisted suicide laws allow abusive caregivers to legally obtain lethal drugs."*

As physicians, we recognize every attempted suicide as a cry for help. Depression, even suicidal depression, is eminently treatable. Depression in the context of terminal illness is likewise treatable. We staunchly object to carving out "terminal" as a special class for which physicians must suspend the standards of medical care.

Physician assisted suicide supporters are attempting to shift CEJA's focus away from the inherent unethical character of assisted suicide laws. Assisted suicide supporters have asserted that the maintenance of a firm AMA ethical stance condemning assisted suicide laws creates an ethical dilemma in the six states and the District of Columbia which have passed assisted suicide laws. On the contrary, the ethical dilemma is not created by the AMA, but by assisted suicide laws themselves. A brief review of the history of euthanasia, assisted suicide and their purgation from medicine may be found [here](https://wp.me/P3Lw4u-3CR).

Dr. Cretella, President of the College stated,

*"As physicians, we are privileged to accompany our patients through joyful times of vigorous health, as well as times of sorrow and illness. We cure sometimes, provide care and comfort always. Physicians are healers not killers."*

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