

Ezra Mandel

Allow assisted dying for all who choose it

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Dear Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying,

I support the right of any individual who has made a clear decision, free from coercion, to choose a physician-assisted death.

1. The choice of a physician-assisted death should be available for all who freely choose it.
2. Physicians should honour a patient's request for a physician-assisted death when that request is made freely and explicitly in advance, for example through an advance care directive (or similar living will).
3. I don't support a waiting period. They are necessarily arbitrary.
4. I'm strongly opposed to any requirement that a patient would have to consult with anyone besides their physician, particularly a pastor or religious leader. Choosing to end a life is a personal choice between a patient and their physician.
5. A second, independent physician should be required to provide written confirmation that the patient has made a free, voluntary, and informed decision and meets the criteria for access to physician-assisted dying. This will ensure that the patient is competent and is not being coerced into a decision that they would not otherwise make. A specialized capacity assessment may be sought by either physician if they have any uncertainty about the patient's capacity to provide informed consent. An individual whose request for a physician-assisted death is declined would have the right of timely appeal. Physicians, who regularly judge a patient's competency, are sufficiently qualified to attest to whether a patient is making a free, voluntary, and informed decision. Additional psychological tests only serve to create further barriers to access and needlessly restrict patients' rights.
6. I don't support establishing independent panels to determine the legitimacy of an individual's request to have a physician-assisted death. Such requests should remain between a patient and their physician.
7. There is no moral argument for limiting access to a physician-assisted death to individuals with "a grievous and irremediable medical condition."
8. Safeguards should ensure that decisions are free, voluntary, and informed but should not make access unjustly difficult.
9. Physician-assisted death should be guaranteed through the publicly-funded healthcare system and institutions that refuse should see their funding removed.
10. There should be no "conscientious objection" clauses for physicians and pharmacists who refuse to honour a patient's request for a physician-assisted death.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ezra Mandel