

**CALVARY
HOSPITAL**

Where Life Continues

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December 4, 2015

Honorable Members
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Member of the Assembly:

As a non-profit institution specializing in hospice and palliative care, headquartered in the Bronx, Calvary Hospital stands opposed to legislation which would legalize the practice of physician-assisted death.

Calvary Hospital is the only fully accredited acute care specialty hospital exclusively providing palliative care for adult advanced cancer patients in the country. Calvary provides an extensive continuum of care which includes inpatient care, outpatient care, hospice, home care, pastoral care, bereavement support and more.

It has been our experience that patients faced with a diagnosis of terminal cancer seek physical, emotional and spiritual comfort. They do not seek medications with which to end their lives. We have found that when patients receive high quality care, appropriate pain management, compassion and comfort, their anxiety is greatly diminished and they desire to live their lives in dignity until the natural end.

The physical aspects of pain can be managed effectively for all patients. Groundbreaking advances in pain medicine have taken place. Researchers have identified pain receptors and clarified the process by which pain signals are transmitted to the brain. These findings have translated into a variety of more effective therapies for treating pain in terminal cancer patients.

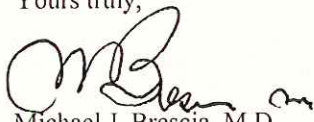
It is much more difficult to control the emotional aspects of pain and suffering. At Calvary, we have found that with attention, affection, and high quality care, we can prevent patients from saying they want to die.

We must not abandon terminally ill patients. Rather than legalizing physician-assisted death, we urge the New York State Assembly to turn its attention to ensuring that all patients receive the high quality health care to which they are entitled, and to promoting full access to pain management, palliative care and hospice. Together, as a society, we must do more to reach out to and welcome with compassion those patients who feel they no longer have value or have become burdensome to others.

Many patients with a cadre of unendurable symptoms, complicated by large cancerous growths have requested, on the day of admission, a definite, decisive action to end their lives. Within 24 hours, this request is never made again. The reason is the immersion of the patients in a pool of love which makes all symptoms endurable.\

The thrust for the emotional pain suffered is replaced by maximum symptom control and human presence. Each patient is considered to be a gift to those of us who have spent meaningful lives caring for the most vulnerable.

Yours truly,


Michael J. Brescia, M.D.
MJB:jtm



Calvary Hospital. Where the Sanctity of Life is Revered.



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