# Choice and Dignity – July 2026 - 3rd Quarter Newsletter

## Welcome

Happy July to All!

Choice and Dignity has been busy, as has the rest of the Right-to-Die Movement.

I should remind everyone that July is designated as "Make A Will" month. If you don't have a will, you can find resources to help you create all your advance planning documents on our website. Here's a link to a nice CNBC review on online will makers. https://www.cnbc.com/select/best-online-will-makers/

If you already have a will, take a few moments to make sure it is up to date, especially if you have experienced one of the "5 D's." Many estate and advance care planning groups use the "5 D's" as a mnemonic for major life events that should prompt a review of your legal documents. The American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging and various elder-law practices describe these same five (with minor variations) as practical checkpoints.

The five Ds are: Decade, Death, Divorce (or major family change), Diagnosis, or a Decline.

An up-to-date estate/EOL plan is one of the best legacies that you can leave behind.

### Recent Local Happenings

**How to Get the Death You Want Classroom Series**

HTGTDYW wrapped with 5-star reviews. Next edition Feb-March 2027

**Book Club**

Alas, Poor Yorick… Our Book Club has died an ugly death bereft of friends and participants. Having learned you all aren't readers we are hoping that you might be drinkers, so we are booting up "Death Over Drafts" here in Tucson

**Death Over Drafts** – We had about 20 people come out for our inaugural event done in concert with Nicole Smith of "Dementia" publishing fame. Our next event is in Marana in early September.

### Upcoming Choice & Dignity Local Events

#### Mark your calendars!

Full details for all events and registration links can be found at choiceanddignity.org.

## • Death Café

Death Café: Talking About Death Won't Kill You. **Saturday, July 11, 2026**. Murphy Wilmot Library Small Meeting Room. Doors open at 10:15 a.m.; discussion runs from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Is it difficult to find someone to talk openly with about your concerns and wishes about dying? We will discuss issues such as planning for a peaceful death, talking to loved ones about end-of-life concerns, and finding someone to serve as your medical power of attorney. You are also welcome to bring up anything else that is on your mind.

*Feel free to bring a friend or family member.*
*Open to the Public. Refreshments Provided. No admission Fee*
*Facilitated by Krysta Kavanaugh.*

Register here: ***mailto:info+deathcafe@choiceanddignity.org***

## • Mortality Movie Series: Up Next — "In My Own Time."

Ekstrom Columbus Library, **Saturday, August 22**. Doors open at 2:15 p.m.; viewing runs from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.; discussion runs from 3:30 to 4:15 p.m.

This documentary looks at what it means to die on one's own terms. Using firsthand accounts from people across Canada, "In My Own Time" offers perspectives on medical assistance in dying that are less commonly seen in media reports and presents an opportunity to educate people on end-of-life choice in Canada. The film follows the emotional stories of people across Canada who chose to end their suffering through MAID and shows how navigating this decision can lead to life-affirming realizations with family and friends. Source: Dying With Dignity Canada.

See the trailer here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZK0ARhcNms

Register here: mailto:info+MortalityMovie@choiceanddignity.org

## • "How to Get the Death You Want" Classroom Series

Our most recent edition of HTGTDYW wrapped with "5 out of 5" reviews.

Our next series will start in **February 2027**. Five consecutive Friday sessions begin February 12 and continue through March 12.

Classes will be held at Harmony Community Healthcare in the Williams Center. Classes run from 10:30-12:30.

Hold a space here: mailto:info+HTGTDYW@choiceanddignity.org

## Upcoming Partner Local Tucson Events

**EVENTS AT OLLI – The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute**

Although you need to be  enrolled at OLLI to attend, we find that these folks make a great audience as we pilot new courses. Coming up in the July Monsoon Session we are doing a six-session course titled **"Solo Aging – Not for Sissies."** The six sessions are: managing finances, choosing a health care proxy and caregivers, planning for changing housing needs, organizing key legal documents, preparing for physical and cognitive changes, and building a reliable support network with the aid of helpful technology.

In the fall session, we will be piloting " **Hope for the Best, Plan for the Rest: Facing a Life Changing Diagnosis"** a workshop to go along with the book of the same name.

## Step Up to Justice is Looking for a Few Good Clients

Step Up to Justice is engaged in a soft relaunch of its Prep with Tech clinic. Prep with Tech assists clients with the preparation of end-of-life planning documents, including health care power of attorney, beneficiary deed, general durable power of attorney, living will, last will and testament, and mental health care power of attorney.

Through the clinic, low-income clients meet one-on-one with a volunteer attorney who drafts their documents during the appointment. Clients leave the clinic with all necessary documents completed.

As we are preparing for our first clinic in late February, we are currently seeking a small number of clients to participate. If you are aware of any individuals who may benefit from this assistance, we would greatly appreciate your help in encouraging them to apply. Clients can apply directly through SU2J's website at: https://www.stepuptojustice.org/apply-for-help

# In the News

### International News

- **World Federation and EUMANs Launch Europe-Wide Petition for Right to Die at Barcelona Conference**

Dear colleagues,

The time has come to bring this issue to Europe.

For years each of us has fought, country by country, for the right to a dignified death. That work is not over, but the ground has shifted. Polling shows clear majority support for reform across the continent, the European Court of Human Rights is watching national openings closely, and more countries are moving every year. The conditions are finally there to carry the fight to the European level. Together.

### *The campaign has launched*

The Barcelona conference on 19 June was a great success. Co-hosted with Eumans, it brought campaigners together from across Europe and gave us our launch platform: **lastright.eu**, our Europe-wide petition for the right to a voluntary, assisted death.

This is the formal start of a coordinated, Europe-wide campaign. The people have spoken, country after country and yet politicians fail to act. lastright.eu is our message to them: **they deserve to be heard.**

### *What we are asking the European Union*

The petition, launched by the World Federation of Right to Die Societies together with Eumans, calls for four concrete measures:

- Recognition of the right to voluntary assisted dying in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- European legislation protecting individual end-of-life choices;

- Cross-border recognition of living wills and advance directives;
- A European Citizens' Assembly on the right to die with dignity.

### *The most concrete point: the living will cross borders*

A living will, or advance healthcare directive, is a legal document in which a person sets out their wishes on medical treatment and life-sustaining measures, for the moment when they can no longer communicate or decide for themselves. A wish expressed in one country must be recognised and respected in another.

Europe already does this in other fields. A medical prescription written in one country must be accepted in another (Cross-Border Healthcare Directive 2011/24/EU). And during the pandemic, with the Green Pass, Europe built in just a few months a digital health certificate recognised by every member State (EU Digital COVID Certificate, Regulation (EU) 2021/953). Europe knows how to do this. We are only asking it to do the same with the living will.

We are not asking Europe to make laws it cannot make. We are asking it to do something it has already done before. And once Europe starts working on this small, concrete point, the bigger question — **the right itself** — comes to the table on its own.

These are distinct tracks: the first one is the long-term direction, the living will one is the step we can try to take right now.

### *One ask, right now*

The petition has already gathered thousands of signatures and the support of 11 organisations across 9 countries.

**With your network, we can reach many more people. We are asking you for two actions:**

1. **Add your organisation** to the list of supporters. Just reply to this email and I will do the rest.
2. **Alert your members and ask them to sign.** A single email from your organisation can deliver thousands of signatures.
3. Even if your organisation is outside of Europe, please share the petition. Simply select 'other' when completing the name of the country.

Sign and share: **https://www.lastright.eu/#sign**

### *The road ahead*

This petition is the first step, not the last. We will write again soon with more ways to keep up the pressure: public and online meetings, street stalls and activism, and meetings with your MEPs.

Our first target is 50,000 signatures. Together we can reach it and send European politicians a message they cannot ignore.

Please act today: add your organisation's name, and tell your members.

With thanks and solidarity,

Peter Warren

- **Canadian man admits sending 'suicide packets' to hundreds of people around world**

  https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/may/29/canada-kenneth-law-suicide-packets-hundreds-of-people-around-world?CMP=share_btn_url

- **South Africa attempts to decriminalize MAID Our court challenge is underway**

  On the 9th of April, we (Dignity South Africa) lodged our constitutional challenge for medical assistance in dying (MAiD) to be decriminalised and we've been tremendously encouraged by the engagement that has ensued. In **From the Chairperson's Desk** in our latest edition of *Dignity Matters*, Prof Landman reports on the responses that we have received to date.

- **Canada: How Quebec, in a Decade, Came to Lead the World in Assisted Dying**

  A society once strongly Roman Catholic has rejected the church's prohibition on euthanasia, with many instead viewing control over one's death as an individual right.

  Read the New York Times article here:
  https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/15/world/canada/quebec-medically-assisted-dying-catholic.html?unlocked_article_code=1.qlA.xQrW.wjJ7PEipG8-m&smid=nytcore-ios-share

- **Canada**: **Quebec to Now Allow Assisted Suicide for Individuals Incapable of Giving Consent**

The provincial government's website states that "advance requests" for medical aid in dying may be made by individuals who have "been diagnosed with a serious and incurable illness leading to incapacity" such as Alzheimer's disease. Read the article here: https://tinyurl.com/yc8bpdf6

- **United Kingdom:** British Parliament goes for it again. Following the fall of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill in May due to opposition within the House of Lords, campaign groups are laying the groundwork to reintroduce an identical bill. They are explicitly preparing to invoke the Parliament Act 1911 in the upcoming session when parliament re-opens. This Act is a rare constitutional mechanism that would allow the House of Commons to bypass the House of Lords' obstruction entirely and force the bill through to Royal Assent.

- The Netherlands - The End-of-Life Management Foundation (Stichting Levenseinderegie) drafted the End-of-Life Management Act and launched a Citizens' Initiative. With 40,000 signatures, the Bill will be placed on the agenda of the Dutch House of Representatives this autumn. On June 9, 2026, the Citizens' Initiative will be presented with 75,000 signatures in the hall of the House of Representatives. Read more at https://wfrtds.org/news/.

- **For the most complete International News –**

Please visit our partner website at the World Federation of Right to Die Societies. https://wfrtds.org/news/

## National News

- **US federal judge blocks Alabama from executing man by nitrogen gas.**

A federal judge on Tuesday permanently blocked Alabama from executing a man with nitrogen gas after declaring the method violates the ban on cruel and unusual punishment. Alabama became the first state in the nation to use the execution method in January 2024 but has faced repeated legal challenges to its use. Ed. Note: Let's hope they do some better research. Click the link below to read the article.

https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jun/09/alabama-execution-judge-ruling?CMP=share_btn_url

- **We are one-third of the way to universal access to MAID**
  The New York Times highlighted a milestone that would have seemed unlikely just a generation ago: by September, nearly one-third of Americans will live in a

jurisdiction where medical aid in dying is authorized.
Read the article here: **https://lnkd.in/gHgz4MFV**

- **CMS News: CMS Strengthens Patient Protections and Accountability in Organ Donation System**
  The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today issued new guidance to strengthen public trust and ensure patients and their families are treated with dignity and care throughout the organ donation process. The guidance clarifies and reinforces the responsibilities of Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs) and donor hospitals, both in providing patients full medical care regardless of potential donor status and allowing families the time to make decisions regarding organ donation without coercion. This action follows reports that some OPOs have rushed aspects of the organ donation and procurement process, pressuring families to make decisions during moments of grief. Read the entire announcement here: https://links-2.govdelivery.com/CL0/https:%2F%2Fwww.cms.gov%2Fmedicare%2Fhealth-safety-standards%2Fquality-safety-oversight-general-information%2Fpolicy-memos%2Fpolicy-memos-states-cms-locations%2Forgan-procurement-organizations-opos-donor-hospitals-responsibilities/1/0101019d1721a156-41a3d4b4-4b0f-4c38-b99c-65753a54f68d-000000/VuGyeGileJbHo2JEo3Hf6TQPN3kjTbSi4Puv7oEnlsc=449

- **Recent lawsuits brought against death doulas by the funeral industry in California and Indiana are causing growing concern for community death care practitioners and educators nationwide.** Here's what you need to know, and what steps death doulas can take to protect themselves.
- From our friends at the **Order of the Good Death** – How the funeral industry is trying to limit free speech-by targeting Death Doulas. Read the article here: https://tinyurl.com/yj99wukn

## State Happenings

- **Michigan Democrats Revive Push to Legalize Medical Aid in Dying**
  May 29, 2026
  Associated Press / news@whmi.com
  Laws that would allow doctors to prescribe life-ending medication to terminally ill patients are being considered once again in Michigan. House Democrats unveiled a package of bills last month to create a "Death with Dignity Act," following a similar effort in the previous term by Senate Democrats to legalize physician-assisted death in the state. Similar laws cover more than 100 million Americans in 14 states.

  Click here to read the article:

https://www.whmi.com/news/article/mi-dems-revive-push-to-legalize-physician-assisted-suicide

- **Colorado woman pleads guilty to manslaughter in mother's assisted suicide**
  Kim Roller accepted a plea deal with no jail time after prosecutors say she violated state's medical aid in dying law Virginia decriminalizes Suicide.

Read the article here:
https://www.denver7.com/news/investigations/colorado-woman-pleads-guilty-to-manslaughter-in-mothers-assisted-suicide

- **Virginia:** Virginia Decriminalizes Suicide

A recently passed bill decriminalizing suicide in Virginia has been championed by many as overdue relief for families of those who have died by suicide, but it also raises questions from a Catholic ethical perspective. Read the article here:
https://www.ncronline.org/node/330491

- Our friends at **Compassion & Choices** continue to be busy in the courtrooms. Here's what they have done. A contribution link is at the bottom, if you can support their efforts.

"Compassion & Choices is dedicated to ensuring that your end-of-life wishes are honored. So this year, we established the nation's first-ever nonprofit law firm devoted solely to end-of-life justice: The End-of-Life Justice Center at Compassion & Choices. Or, as we most often call it, Compassion Legal.

Every day, a team of attorneys show up to fight for you and your rights at the end of life. Thanks to your support, Compassion Legal is able to be involved in key litigation nationwide:

- **Delaware and Colorado**: Two wins for medical aid in dying

When federal lawsuits challenging medical aid in dying laws were filed in both states, Compassion Legal moved to intervene on behalf of terminally ill patients and their advocates. In Delaware, the court dismissed the challenge entirely; in Colorado, the Magistrate Judge recommended dismissal because the anti-MAID groups were not harmed by the law, and access has continued uninterrupted in both states. The opposition has appealed the Delaware ruling to the Third Circuit, where we have moved again to intervene.

- **Tennessee:** Defending the right to discuss your options

When Tennessee moved to criminalize discussions and advice about out-of-state healthcare options, Compassion Legal filed an amicus brief in Welty v. Dunaway —

because the right to openly discuss end-of-life care with your family, your friends, and your trusted medical providers should never depend on where you live.

- **Michigan:** A monumental win for advance directive rights

In October 2025, we filed Koskenoja v. Whitmer, challenging a Michigan law that stripped pregnant people of the right to refuse life-sustaining treatment — automatically voiding their advance directives if they were pregnant and incapacitated.

A court subsequently ruled the law unconstitutional under Michigan's Reproductive Freedom for All constitutional amendment — a first-of-its-kind ruling.

- **Kansas:** Challenging pregnancy exclusion laws nationwide

A Kansas court has denied the state's motion to dismiss a lawsuit challenging the state's "Pregnancy Exclusion" law — a law that can invalidate a pregnant person's advance directive and override their end-of-life care wishes.

The case, brought by Compassion & Choices and partners, argues that everyone deserves the right to make their own healthcare decisions, regardless of pregnancy status. This ruling means the challenge can move forward in court as advocates continue fighting to protect patient autonomy and end-of-life rights.

"Stripping people of their right to make deeply personal end-of-life decisions simply because they are pregnant is offensive, discriminatory, and blatantly inconsistent with the Kansas Constitution," said **Jess Pezley**, senior staff attorney at Compassion Legal.

Read more: **https://lnkd.in/eSCec5mP**

- **New York and Illinois:** Ensuring new laws take effect

Just last week, a group of people and organizations filed lawsuits to stop new medical aid-in-dying laws from taking effect. We expected these legal challenges, and we are jumping in to defend the laws and keep them on schedule.

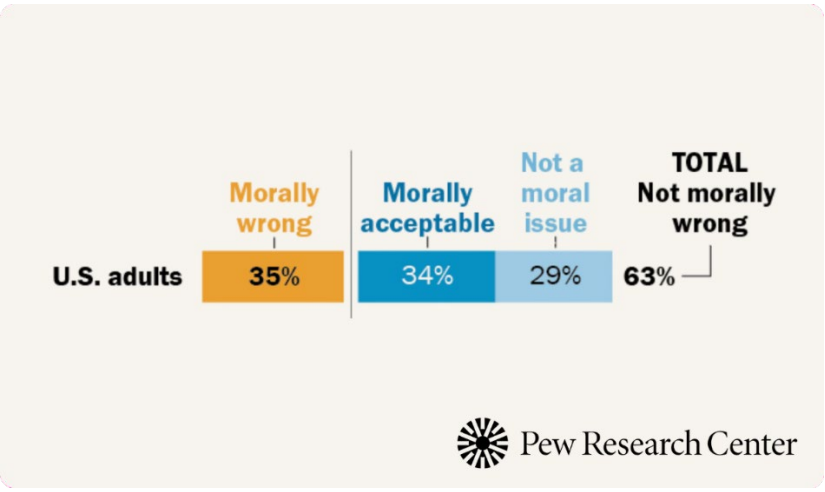
Involvement in key end-of-life litigation is only possible because of your support.

Donate to their efforts here: https://tinyurl.com/nz95d46z

## Research News

**From Pew Research Center**

**63% of Americans don't have a moral issue with MAID**




A recent Pew Research Center study reports that the majority of Americans think that medical aid in dying (MAID) is morally permissible. The study further breaks down data on the correlation between participants having certain political or religious affiliations and their likelihood of supporting MAID. See the data here: https://tinyurl.com/4z75sk4x

- **New report examines the main barriers to MAID in the U.S.**

The Completed Life Initiative's new landscape analysis reveals that the legalization of medical aid in dying (MAID) does not automatically guarantee access for eligible patients. Authored by bioethicist Sarah Kiskadden-Bechtel, MBe, this report examines the national MAID landscape, mapping out the social, structural, and clinical barriers patients face, while offering recommendations to improve access for eligible individuals.

See the research here: https://tinyurl.com/4shb7x2t

## Board News & Meetings

The Board meets bi-monthly on the 2nd Saturday. Our next meeting will be **Saturday**

**August 8th.**

All are welcome. Please register by clicking here:

mailto:info+BoardMeeting@choiceanddignity.org?subject=I'd like to attend

### Prepare to Die - Resources You Can Use

- Jennifer O'Brien, author of "The Hospice Doctor's Widow" provides a great end-of-life planning toolkit, as well as other tools, free of charge, on her website. Check out her "At Peace Tool Kit" at this link: https://jenniferaobrien.com/at-peace-toolkit
- "You Paid for Dinner, Did You Leave the Tip?" by Rachel from AfterLight

Let me guess. You adulted. Big time. You sat down with an estate planning attorney, signed the papers, and walked out feeling like a responsible adult. Will? Check. Financial Power of Attorney and Advance Healthcare Directives? Double check. You practically deserve a gold star. But here is the thing most people do not realize: those documents are usually the foundation, not the finish line. What they do is set a legal process in motion. What they may not do is automatically put cash in your family's hands when they need it most. So, while the process is grinding away, your loved ones are scrambling to pay for a funeral, navigate probate, and hire an attorney, all at the same time, all out of their own pocket.

All that paperwork is not going to stop your family from having the worst week of their lives getting a whole lot worse.

Leaving access to funds for immediate expenses after your death is like paying for dinner and leaving the tip. Everyone remembers the dinner. Nobody thinks about the tip. Until the server is standing there and your family is digging through their pockets. Read the article at: https://myafterlight.com/dinner-and-the-tip/

## Media Resources You Can Use

### T.V./Streaming/Film of the Quarter

***The Room Next Door***, a Pedro Almodóvar film starring Tilda Swinton and Julianne Moore.

The story focuses on Martha, a war photographer facing terminal cancer, and Ingrid, a novelist whose friendship with Martha has grown distant. Ingrid and Martha became close friends while working together at the same magazine. After years of being out of touch, they meet again in an extreme but strangely sweet situation.

You can find it on Netflix.

### Poetry of the Quarter

from the Mishkan T'filah via Dignity S.A.

When I die give what's left of me away to children and old men that wait to die.

And if you need to cry, cry for your brother walking the street beside you. And when you need me, put your arms around anyone and give them what you need to give me.

I want to leave you something, something better than words or sounds. Look for me in the people I've known or loved, and if you cannot give me away, at least let me live in your eyes and not your mind.

You can love me best by letting hands touch hands, and by letting go of children that need to be free. Love doesn't die; people do. So, when all that's left of me is love, give me away.

## Podcast of the Qtr

**Death Readiness Podcast with Jill Mastroianni**

You're the one prepping for your child's IEP meeting while trying to talk your aging dad out of getting a puppy. You're booking medical appointments, managing the money, juggling work emails during school pickup and still expected to keep the fridge stocked and know who has practice, rehearsal, or a field trip tomorrow.
Your parents are struggling, but they still insist they're fine. You see the mobility issues, the memory slips, the unopened mail, but every offer to help feels like an argument. You're scared to push. You're scared to wait. And there's no clear roadmap for how to do any of this without losing your mind or your family.
Hosted by Jill Mastroianni, an estate planning and probate attorney and trusted guide for women holding it all together, this podcast is your space to untangle the mess. With more than a decade of legal experience, Jill brings clarity to the hardest conversations most families avoid until it's too late. Each episode offers honest stories, practical tools, and bite-sized steps you can actually take, even if you're overwhelmed, even if you're grieving, even if you're still waiting for your mom to give you the password to the computer. You don't need a perfect plan. You just need a place to start.
Death readiness isn't about control. It's about love and the courage to face what's next with open eyes and a steady hand. Check it out here:
**https://www.deathreadiness.com/podcast**

## Book of the Quarter:

***Wingman: Escorting My Father to a Death with Dignity***
by Daniel Zimberoff (Author) Format: Paperback

From a dying wish comes a story navigating the emotional terrain that lies between autonomy, duty, power, and love.

As Parkinson's Disease attacks his brain and body, David Zimberoff, an uncompromising intellectual who loves his family and has much to live for, fears his downward trajectory will end with him losing his mind and burdening his children. To avoid this torment and ensure he leaves on his terms, David makes the agonizing decision to fly halfway across the globe to end his life with medical assistance.

His choice begins a journey with his son, Daniel, which exposes past wounds and raises questions about how to live and how to die. Their story explores the transformation of a father and son's relationship and the heart-wrenching issues surrounding assisted dying. Nearing his scheduled death, David faces his greatest challenge: can he find the healing and closure both he and Daniel seek before time runs out? As more people with terminal illnesses or intolerable suffering grapple with how to end their lives peacefully, this unapologetic memoir sets aside political and religious debates of assisted dying to illustrate that at the root of such a decision is the desire to leave this world with love, grace, and dignity.

Available on Amazon https://a.co/d/0cE0hJke

## Blog of the Quarter

**Good Death Society - More of Us Will Need Assistance to Die Well by Faye Girsh**

*(Faye Girsh is a retired clinical and forensic psychologist. She founded the Hemlock Society of San Diego 38 years ago when it was a chapter of Hemlock Society USA, started by Derek Humphry in 1980, She served as president, board member, and newsletter editor for the World Federation of Right to Die Societies, was president of Hemlock USA, and co-founder of Final Exit Network.)*

Several recent events seem to point to the fact that many Americans would prefer greater access to aid in dying. For example, renowned psychologist Daniel Kahneman – an expert on decision-making – chose to go to Switzerland at age 90 to have a legal, peaceful, medically assisted death. He reasoned that the burdens of continuing his life would outweigh the benefits of ending it. It is a decision model he advocated and ultimately used.

How much less anxiety would older people experience if they knew that after a certain age, like 85 — and/or with difficult, painful chronic conditions — they could choose to end their lives peacefully, with assistance if required? To prevent coercion, it would be appropriate to have an Advance Request, which could be completed before the person loses capacity — a measure adopted by the Canadian province of Québec (which is, by the way, 61 percent Catholic). This could prevent prolonged, expensive stays in nursing homes where "life" often exists without cognition, but with pain and over-medication.

It is cruel to require that kind of ending of a life that was productive, loving, and interactive if the owner of that life prefers it to be finished before independence is irretrievably lost.

Read the entire blog here: https://tinyurl.com/5bxf4e4s

## Other Media

### Websites

- **PatientChoices.org from Vermont**
  Vermont is one of two states with no residency requirements for Medical Aid in Dying.
  PatientChoices.org has an entire section of their website devoted to answering questions for non-residents. Check it out here:
  https://www.patientchoices.org/non-residents.html
  Also, a wonderful collection of informative short videos: ***Exit Matters***
  Facing the End with Humor and Heart **https://www.patientchoices.org/exit-matters.html**

- **Melissa at Peacefulendoflife.com** has some great insight and resources. Check out her free resources on her website. Check them out here:
  https://www.peacefulendoflife.com/free-guides/

- From our friends at the **End Well Project**: **Loose Ends**
  "Dear friends,
  At End Well we believe people should be able to stay connected to the things they love for as long as possible.

  We talk a lot about comfort, dignity, and care, but living well through serious illness is also about continuing to be yourself. It's gardening. Woodworking. Writing. Painting. Knitting. The hobbies and passions that give shape to our days and remind us of who we are beyond a diagnosis.

  But illness doesn't always cooperate with our plans.

  A quilt remains unfinished. A sweater stays on the needles. These unfinished objects can carry a surprising amount of weight—not just for the person who started them, but for the people they leave behind.

  That's what moves us about the nonprofit Loose Ends. Their premise is simple: when illness, disability, or death prevents someone from completing a handmade

project, volunteer "finishers" step in to finish it and return it to the intended recipient. What their volunteers are really offering isn't a finished scarf or quilt. It's continuity—the chance to keep doing what you love for as long as you can, knowing that if you can't manage the final stitches, another set of hands will.

And here's something we didn't expect: Loose Ends is looking for more projects. Which means this may be your official permission slip to start the thing you're worried you won't finish. Knit the sweater. Sew the curtains. Make the giant quilt.

The finishers are ready, so let's get started!

With love,

Shoshana, Tracy, and Molly

Click here to go to Loose Ends: https://tinyurl.com/y2u7tewb

**Substack Resources:**

- Our friends at the World Federation of Right to Die Societies recommend that we take a look at VADMEDIAwatch.com**,** an excellent newsletter that is published weekly from our friends at VAD Newswatch.

  They are based in Australia but regularly include really useful and relevant links to stories around the world.

  Check them out here: https://vadmediawatch.substack.com/

## Webinar Recordings of Interest:

- From Funeral Consumers Alliance

Becky Robison: *Bureaucracy from Beyond the Grave: Guiding the Living Through the Paperwork of the Deceased*.

The recording is now available at this link.

- ***From Roots and Roads***

  *From the Ground Up: Raising Death Literate Children*

Cultural anthropologist and writer Anita Hannig challenges the assumption that sheltering children from death protects them. While we have sanitized death into something that happens elsewhere—in hospitals, nursing homes, and funeral parlors—

we have inadvertently left children unprepared for one of life's most universal experiences. As a parent to a death-curious four-year-old who loves visiting cemeteries, Anita argues that speaking thoughtfully with kids about our shared mortality may equip them with the tools and frameworks to navigate life's unavoidable losses. See the recording here: https://rootsandroads.org/from-the-ground-up-raising-death-literate-children/

# Guest Articles

## What Are We Calling "Right to Die" This Week?

By David Swift

If you've ever tried to have a thoughtful, well-informed conversation about the right to die, you may have noticed something curious. Before you can even express your opinion, you must first choose your vocabulary family.

It's a bit like ordering coffee these days. Are you having black coffee or an oat-milk caramel latte with existential foam? Same beverage, wildly different emotional commitment. Welcome to the wonderfully complex and occasionally confusing world of end-of-life choice terminology—where the stakes are high, the language is nuanced, and everyone is quietly hoping they've picked the "right" phrase for the room.

Let's start simple—call them 'death's greatest hits,' or at least as simple as this topic ever gets.

There's the classic: "death with dignity" or "end-of-life choice." They sound reassuring, humane, and like something you'd want in a tasteful brochure next to a watercolor sunset. Then there's "medical aid in dying (MAID)" or just "aid in dying," which brings clinical clarity to the conversation—less poetry, more prescription pad. To be more formal, you might say, "physician-assisted dying." Or if you're feeling like you've stepped into a debate from 20 years ago, you

might hear "physician-assisted suicide." Same general idea. Very different reactions at the dinner table. But if you're writing, speaking, or just trying to avoid an awkward pause at brunch, you can't go too wrong with these widely accepted, neutral phrases that keep the focus where it belongs—on thoughtful discussion rather than a heated debate.

However, if you're leaning toward deeper reflection and want to sound professional, win the book club contest, or die whitewater rafting in Appalachia, you can always reach for

phrases like "conscious dying," "final freedom," "life fulfillment," or "self-deliverance." These phrases make people nod thoughtfully, perhaps while holding a glass of wine and contemplating the meaning of existence. And if you really want to elevate the tone, try choosing "one's final chapter." It sounds less like a legal or medical discussion and more like the closing line of an award-winning novel.

Now, let's venture into slightly more spirited territory and say you want to start an argument. Terms like "voluntary euthanasia" and "rational suicide" don't just describe—they provoke. These are the linguistic equivalent of tossing a match into a room full of strong opinions and seeing what happens. Or if your focus is on personal rights—and you're feeling inspired—you have a whole library to choose from: "the freedom to die," "personal sovereignty," "the right to self-determination," or "end-of-life autonomy." At this point, it starts to sound like the Bill of Rights or a philosophy seminar.

When you think the terminology couldn't get any more varied, along comes a set of phrases that feel almost lyrical... the poetic side. For example, there's "a good death," "compassionate choice," "merciful release," or "the final exit." When these come up, you half expect to see angels, or at least some soft music playing in the background.

Why so many terms? This topic sits at the intersection of law, medicine, ethics, philosophy, personal belief, and deep human emotion. Each phrase highlights a slightly different lens: medical reality, legal framing, personal autonomy, emotional resonance, or cultural or ethical perspective.

In other words, the words aren't just words; they're signals about what matters most in the conversation.

Final Thought

In the end (no pun intended), whether someone says, "the right to die," "choosing one's final chapter," or "a self-determined ending," they're trying to express something deeply personal: the desire for dignity, autonomy, and meaning at life's close. If the terminology sometimes feels overwhelming, that's okay. It just means we're taking the subject seriously—and perhaps, in our very human way, trying to find the right words for one of life's most profound questions... "What can we do to face our mortality with dignity, compassion, and meaning?"

## Voices of the Opposition

**Grandma, Ben Sasse, and Louis Theroux Walk into a Bar**

Jamie's Corner: Chapter Twenty-Eight

Here's a link to a brief article about death, dying, and suffering from Jamie Towey, Aging with Dignity's President.

https://tinyurl.com/y2w7ejmc

It's a great example of how we can both see the same things but with a completely different interpretation.

## Your Life, Your Death, Your Questions

This section is devoted to our readers' questions. Feel free to send us your questions for our next issue:

- Q. Is an Executor Liable for a Deceased Taxes?

  A:. Executors typically do not inherit a deceased person's tax debt, but their actions may result in personal liability.

  Federal tax priority rules often require federal taxes to be paid before other debts.

  Selling or distributing assets before resolving tax debts is one of the most common ways executors put themselves at risk of personal liability.

  Tax resolution strategies can protect the executor as well as the estate.
  Read the whole article at https://tinyurl.com/3e2ycmud

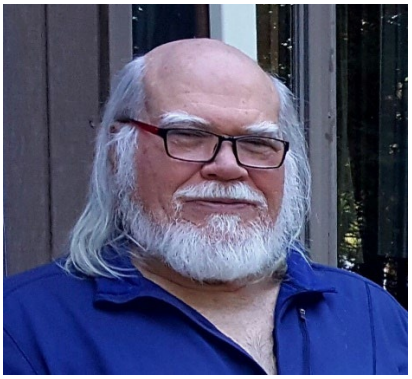
- Q. Can I write MAID into my Advance Directives?

  A. No. Advance directives are documents that describe what you as a dying person want done (or not done) medically if you can no longer make decisions for yourself. Aid-in-dying laws *cannot* be used under advance directives for this reason.

- Q: My family member is in a nursing home. Can they get hospice care there?
  A: In theory, yes. In reality, it can be difficult to get nursing homes to refer residents to hospice as they provide "comfort care" themselves. This is not always as comprehensive as actual hospice care. If you are considering a nursing home, ask about referrals to hospice so you understand if they will make that referral if you want it.
  - Another side of the question: Can I get Maid in a Nursing Home?

See the article here: https://www.mcknights.com/news/aid-in-dying/

## Meet Your Board - **David Swift** - Member at Large & Grassroots Organizing Lead



From an early age, I have felt a profound curiosity about death—not simply as an ending, but as a passage into something beyond what we currently understand. While in college, I attended a séance that left a lasting impression on me. During that experience, I had a vivid vision of my own death: I saw myself at an advanced age, climbing a mountain, and peacefully choosing to leave my body.

Since then, I have carried a deep sense that this vision may reflect the way I am meant to depart this life. After college, I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal, where I became immersed in Tibetan Buddhism and its compassionate, deeply thoughtful teachings about dying, transition, and the afterlife. I was especially drawn to The Tibetan Book of the Dead, a text intended to guide the soul through the threshold between life and what comes next.

My time in Nepal strengthened my conviction that death deserves not only contemplation, but reverence, compassion, and preparation. In the 1980s, I came to strongly believe that people have the power to shape their own reality, including how they face life's final chapter. Over the years, this belief has been shaped not only by spiritual study but also by painful personal loss. After battling cancer for over 10 years, my older brother committed suicide with a firearm, and so did my best friend from high school.

Their deaths left an enduring mark on me and deepened my conviction that people deserve more compassionate, peaceful, and dignified options at the end of life.

Because I have spent much of my life reflecting on how I want to approach my own death when that time comes, the subject of dying with dignity is deeply personal. With my legal background, I was especially moved when I met Jim and had the opportunity to share my desire to help advance changes in Arizona law that would recognize an

individual's right to die with dignity. This work is rooted in my belief that no one should have to face the end of life without compassion, choice, and respect.

As a book publisher, I also feel called to collect and share the stories of others who have encountered death in profound ways—through dying with dignity, near-death experiences, or perceived contact with the afterlife—so that these experiences may offer comfort, understanding, and meaning to others.

Editor's Note: David's business, **Arizona Book Publishing** is looking for authors who have a short story to share, either fiction or non-fiction… on topics such as (1) death and dying, (2) end-of-life issues, (3) entering the afterlife, (4) near-death experiences, and (5) choosing to exit with dignity. Please send an email to ArizonaBookPublishing@gmail.com for details.

# Get Involved

## Volunteer

We are seeking **Board Members**, **Discussion Leaders**, and a **Facebook Guru**.

Also, we really would love to find a **Spanish speaker** who could help us out from time to time as a face to the media.

## Become a Member

Help sustain this mission by becoming a paid member or contributor.

**Contact: 1-800-811-4112 or ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com**

## Our Board of Directors and Volunteers

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| | |
|---|---|
| **Stephanie Pasanen** | Member at Large |
| **David Swift** | Lead -Grassroots Lobbying |
| **Krysta Kavanaugh** | Death Café Facilitator |

## Humor - Looking on the Brightside

### Disruptive or Divine: Liquid Death x Spotify's New Eternal Playlist Urn

The funeral industry is undergoing a radical transformation as the "antiquated and impersonal" traditions of the past meet the hyper-personalised demands of the 21st century. The latest contribution to this shift is the headline-grabbing collaboration between **Liquid Death** and **Spotify**: the **"Eternal Playlist Urn"**. Read the entire article here: https://urnstudios.com/liquid-death-spotify-urn/

### To Die For: A Cookbook of Gravestone Recipes

To Die For: A Cookbook of Gravestone Recipes by Rosie Grant is available in hardcover and has reader ratings on Amazon and Goodreads.

****A *New York Times* and *USA Today* Bestseller****

An inspiring collection of recipes preserved on gravestones, with fascinating interviews from the families, celebrating the beloved food legacies of their dearly departed.

For so many, food is a touching, nostalgic thing that brings us together. So much so that some families choose to remember their loved ones through the dishes they made and the food that brought comfort to those around them by immortalizing their recipes on their gravestones.

Rosie Grant, the creator behind @GhostlyArchive, has been searching out and documenting this interesting phenomenon. In *To Die For*, Rosie collects 40 recipes she's found across the globe, carved into headstones or associated with a grave that has a story to share. Each recipe is accompanied by an interview with the remaining family, plus photography of the food, the gravestone, and any memorabilia the family wanted to share.

Recipes include Spritz Cookies, Homemade Fudge, Chicken Soup, French Silk Pie, Guava Cobbler, …and more!

Thoughtfully and respectfully explored, Rosie has documented this connection between food, legacy, and family, remembering the deceased through the recipes they most

loved, and giving their families a platform to share their loved one's story and cherished dish with the world.

Available on Amazon: https://a.co/d/0gTExVXy

Editor's note: The Snickerdoodles are delicious.