



# Choice and Dignity, Inc.

End-of-Life Training, Resource and Referral

P.O. Box 86886, Tucson, AZ 85754

800-811-4112 ~ [www.ChoiceAndDignity.org](http://www.ChoiceAndDignity.org)

## JULY 2024 Newsletter

News gathered by Jim, edited by J'Fleur & formatted by volunteer Jennifer Treece

### In The News

#### U.S. News:

Nancy Neveloff Dubler, a Harvard-educated lawyer and medical ethicist who pioneered using mediation at hospital bedsides to navigate the complex dynamics among headstrong doctors, anguished family members and patients in their last days, died on April 14 at her home on the Upper West Side of Manhattan. She was 82.

For her full obituary click on the link below:

[https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/10/health/nancy-neveloff-dead.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.rk0.MRec.lzVCvyH-ydw1&smid=url-share](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/05/10/health/nancy-neveloff-dead.html?unlocked_article_code=1.rk0.MRec.lzVCvyH-ydw1&smid=url-share)

#### Recent Medical Aid in Dying - MAID Developments in the States:

**Colorado's Amendment Signed into Law:** Governor Polis signed [SB068](#), an amendment to Colorado's End of Life Options Act, into law on June 5. The bill will reduce the waiting period for patients seeking an aid-in-dying prescription from 15 to 7 days, increase the number of practitioners who can participate in the law, and allow providers to waive the waiting period if the patient is not likely to survive more than 48 hours and meets all other qualifications. It will take effect on August 7. This marks the first amendment to the law since its passage in 2016!

**Continued Support for Massachusetts:** On June 5, the End of Life Options Massachusetts Coalition hosted a Lobby Day in Boston where advocates gathered at the State House to push for the passage of the Massachusetts End of Life Options Act in the Senate. Additionally, a new poll by the University of Massachusetts Amherst/WCVB revealed that two-thirds of Bay Staters support Death with Dignity!

(Continued in next column)

**Illinois' Historic Run:** Although the Illinois End of Life Options Act did not advance beyond the Senate End of Life Issues subcommittee before the legislative session ended, this marks the first time since 1997 that aid-in-dying legislation was introduced in Illinois. With this momentum, we're excited to see all the progress 2025 will bring for this bill. [Hear from lead bill sponsor, Senator Linda Holmes, and Khadine Bennett, Director of Advocacy and Intergovernmental Affairs at the ACLU of Illinois, as they address questions and dispel misconceptions about the bill here.](#)

#### Local News (AZ and CA happenings):

Choice & Dignity's classroom series in May on "How to Get the Death You Want" recently concluded our five sessions with over 20 people in attendance. Here's a sample of the feedback from one of the participants.

"I want to thank everyone on the board for the outstanding class that you just presented and especially Jim, for being such a great facilitator. I really appreciate all of the time and effort that was put into researching and preparing for this class. It was a tremendous effort on all of you to have so many facts on all of the various topics but it was well worth our time and I feel much better informed on all of the issues. I also really enjoyed the input from Harmony Hospice. Thank you again. Debbie Cleland"

We will be running the series again starting Friday, October 4 through Friday, November 1.

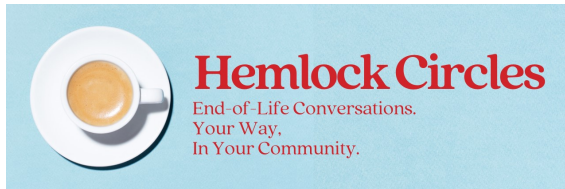
Save the dates on your calendar and invite your family and friends.

You can register here:

[Registration Link](#)



HE LOOKS SO NATURAL.



## Hemlock Circles

Out in San Diego, Board Member, Dr. Sally Hall, is forming a Hemlock Circle. These are small group gatherings focused on end-of-life issues similar to an Exit Cafe.

Two Hemlock Circles are being formed in Tucson:

- ◆ Being Mortal Hemlock Circle — Vision: Embracing mortality as an impetus to live life fully  
Leader: Mike Lainhart  
Contact: mike@lainhart.us
- ◆ Cooperative Hemlock Circle — Vision: Bring together people from different organizations for mutual support and collaboration  
Leader: Mary Ganapol  
Contact: mary.ganapol@gmail.com

## Tribute to Laura Vandergrift

We introduced you to our Board Member Laura in the April newsletter. We are both saddened and enheartened by her exit in Switzerland. She was a wonderful volunteer and person. We will miss her. Her goodbye letter can be seen on our website here: [Laura's Goodbye letter](#)

## Quarterly Highlights in Media News and Reviews

**A Curated Selection of Movies, Books, websites, Blogs and T.V. that may interest you.**

### T.V./Streaming/Film — Take Me Out Feet First

In "Take Me Out Feet First," a new docuseries now streaming on Amazon Prime Video, director Serene Meshel-Dillman chronicles people's right to choose medical-aid-in-dying.

The six-part docuseries, made in partnership with the nonprofit advocacy organization, Compassion &

(Continued in next column)

Choices, profiles 25 terminally ill people, their families, and friends, as well as experts in the medical field who advocate for MAID. The series chronicles people who have taken control of how their final days will play out. While some live in states where medical aid in dying is legal, some do not.

"Take Me Out Feet First" was inspired by the director's mother, who, in 2017, chose to end her life using MAID after she was diagnosed with stage four spindle cell sarcoma, a rare form of lung cancer, and given less than three months to live. Meshel-Dillman documented her mother's final days, leading up to her drinking apple juice mixed with the MAID medication to help her peacefully pass away. Her father, originally opposed to MAID, ultimately chose to use medical aid in dying after being diagnosed with cancer in 2022.

The experience with her mother led Meshel-Dillman to make "Take Me Out Feet First," a reference to her mother's longtime wish to only leave the home that she loved "feet first." For two years Meshel-Dillman traveled the country with her husband and cinematographer, Ray Dillman, interviewing people with terminal prognoses who sought to have the same choice at the end of their lives. The director also interviewed patient's families and friends, as well as experts in the MAID field with the hope that the project will speed the movement to legalize medical aid in dying in every state.

### Podcast — Arizona End-of-Life Options

This podcast series explores different viewpoints surrounding the topic of Medical Aid in Dying. Rather than taking the viewpoint that "my view is the only view," listeners are encouraged to instead consider whether those of us who live in a democratic and free society, should have the right to legally and ethically choose for ourselves when and how we will exit this life. <https://azendoflifeoptions.org/podcasts/>

### Blog/Newsletter — Next Avenue

Next Avenue is a nonprofit, digital journalism publication produced by Twin Cities PBS (TPT). As public

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## Quarterly Highlights — continued ...

media's first and only national publication for older adults, we are dedicated to covering the issues that matter most as we age. Our mission is to meet the needs and unleash the potential of older Americans through the power of media.

Next Avenue is unique among today's media:

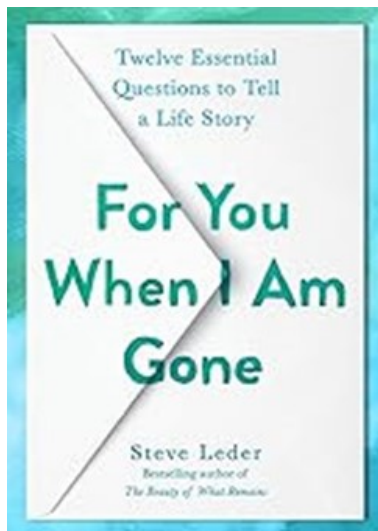
- We are part of the PBS system, so you can trust us to deliver nonprofit public media quality.
- We are journalists and experts passionate about serving our audience.
- We have built a network of impeccable sources and prestigious partnerships.
- We're not here for the bottom line, but to make a difference in the lives of our audience.

This is terrific, useful journalism. Check them out at: <https://www.nextavenue.org/>

## Book — For You When I'm Gone

*New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* bestselling author of *The Beauty of What Remains*, a guide to writing a meaningful letter about your life.

Writing an ethical will, a document that includes stories and reflections about your past, is an ancient tradition. It can include joy and regrets, and ultimately becomes both a way to remember a loved one who is gone and a primer on how to live a better, happier life. Beloved Rabbi Steve Leder has helped thousands of people to write their own ethical wills, and in this intimate book helps us write our own.



Because our culture privileges the material over the spiritual, we sometimes forget that our words carry greater value than any physical thing we can bequeath to our loved ones. Rabbi Leder provides all the right questions and prompts, including: What was your most painful regret and how can your loved ones avoid repeating it? When was a time you led with your heart instead of your head? What did you learn from your biggest failure?

Including examples of ethical wills from a broad range of voices—old and young, with and without children, famous and unknown — *For You When I Am Gone* inspires readers to examine their own lives and turn them into something beautiful and meaningful for generations to come.

## Mortality Movies:

We had over 40 registering to attend the viewing and discussion of the Swiss option in the movie *A Short Stay in Switzerland* on June 15th. Big thanks to our volunteers, Marty Dooley and Jeannie Fransen, for facilitating the discussion



On Saturday, September 21, our next movie in the series will be "Jack Has a Plan."

This movie is both intimate and moving, as the filmmaker and the subject weight the implications and questions that arise from exploring Jack's end of life options. This uplifting and funny story invites viewers to reflect on life's most universal topic: death.

Watch for the RSVP announcement on Meet Up (or in your email) in late August and plan to join us in September at the Columbus-Eckstrom Library. Plan to arrive at 2:15 to sign in as the movie will start at 2:30 pm sharp. While the movie is free, donations are welcome.



## Guest Article

### Hospice and Palliative Care — by Daniel Casto, MD

What are the similarities? What are the differences

The definition of hospice care is compassionate comfort care (as opposed to curative care) for people facing a terminal illness with a prognosis of six months or less, based on their physician's estimate if the disease runs its course as expected.

The definition of palliative care is compassionate comfort care that provides relief from the symptoms and physical and mental stress of a serious or life-limiting illness. Palliative care can be offered at any point in the patient's illness. It can be pursued at diagnosis, during curative treatment and follow-up, and at the end of life.

Both offer pain and symptom relief but the goals of care are different. Hospice is focused on comfort care without cure, either because the patient

no longer has curative options or chooses not to pursue treatment because side effects outweigh benefits. Palliative care is comfort care with or without curative intent. Both palliative and hospice reduce stress, offer complex symptom relief and utilize a team of providers and have been shown in studies to improve quality of life.

Hospice care costs are paid 100 percent by Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance; hospice is the only Medicare benefit that includes pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, 24/7 access to care, nursing, social services, chaplain visits, grief support following a death and other services deemed appropriate by the hospice agency. By comparison, palliative care costs, whether from office visits or prescription charges can vary depending on insurance. Palliative services are paid by insurance or the patient.

#### **Hospice Care Eligibility**

Because of Medicare requirements, hospice is typically utilized by patients with a life expectancy of six months or less. A patient's doctor and a hospice medical director work together to determine life expectancy.

#### **Goal of care**

Patients in hospice are not seeking a cure for their illness. Their goal is managing pain and other symptoms to improve quality of life with the time they have remaining.

#### **Why patients choose hospice**

Patients sometimes decide they no longer want to go through painful or difficult treatments that may not improve or extend their life.

#### **Palliative Eligibility**

Palliative care is for people at any stage of illness. The illness is not required to be life-limiting. Like hospice, palliative care addresses a patient's physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs.

#### **Goal of care**

Palliative care patients can seek treatment to cure their illness or prolong life while getting medical help to manage their pain and other symptoms.

#### **Why patients choose palliative care**

Patients are commonly seeking relief from pain, fatigue, nausea or the stress that comes with a serious illness or the side effects from medical treatment.

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Hospice/Palliative Care article — continued ...

Harmony Hospice and Palliative Care programs offer a great spectrum of care supervised by our Physician Medical Director. Our Medical Director organizes and coordinates the care team and is responsible for the overall direction of care of our interdisciplinary team. The team includes Nurse Practitioners that provide and supervise patient care also. Nurses with years of experience regularly visit patients in their homes and direct and perform the day to day care. Nurses can be RN's or LPN's who are supervised closely by RN's. We have nurses with experience in wound care for complicated wounds and to help prevent common wounds. Hospice aides visit several times a week to attend to personal health care needs including assistance with bathing and feeding.

We have a team of social workers that address physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being in all disease stages, and accompany the patient throughout their journey with us. They conduct home visits, help coordinate care and may act as an advocate with medical providers. They help patients and their families navigate planning for end-of-life care; understand their treatment plan and be vocal about their needs; manage the stresses of debilitating physical illnesses, including emotional, familial and financial; overcome crisis situations; and connect to other support services.

Our spiritual care team provides compassionate care services that support patients and families through the end-of-life and grieving process. Whatever an individual's belief system or cultural tradition may be and whether they consider themselves to be religious or not, we are trained to assess individual needs through active listening and to meet each person wherever they are in their own understanding. As a team we meet weekly together to share and coordinate the care for our patients.

Author: Daniel Casto, MD

I have been a Family Physician for 30 years and am delighted to work with Harmony Hospice for the past 3 years as their Medical Director.

## Exit Café

Hosted by Jeannie Fransen  
**TALKING ABOUT DEATH WON'T KILL YOU!**

Date: Saturday, August 3

Time: 10:45—12:15 pm

Place: Kirk-Bear Canyon Library, 8959 East Tanque Verde Road

**Is it Difficult to Find Someone to Talk Openly with About Our Fears and Wishes About Dying?**

The Café has no agenda, just an opportunity to discuss your issues and concerns about death and dying with like-minded folks. We will discuss issues like:

- ◆ How do I plan for a peaceful death?
- ◆ How do I talk to a loved one about my end-of-life concerns?
- ◆ How do I find someone to be my "medical power of attorney?"

*Feel free to bring a friend or family member.  
Open to the Public.*

*Refreshments Provided.*

*No admission Fee*

MeetUp [Registration Link](#)

Or send us an email at  
ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com

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## Prepare to Die - Resources You can Use

**Who Will Care for Your Pet After You Die?**

You can make a plan that will ensure a good life for your pet.

Although you can't leave money directly to a pet, there are several things you can do to make sure your pets stay well cared for when you can no longer take care of them. Here are some options:



## Care for Your Pet — continued ...

- Leave your pet (with some money) to someone in your will or living trust
- Create a pet trust to leave money for the care of your animal.
- Sign up with a charitable organization's program to provide or find a home for your animal

### *Using a Will or Living Trust to Name a New Owner*

The surest and simplest way to provide care for your pet after you die is to leave your pet (and some money) through a provision in your will or living trust.

If you do this, the person you name will become the owner of your pet and will receive outright any money you leave to him or her for your pet's care. The new owner won't have any legal obligation to care for your pet or use the money in any particular way. But as long as you choose someone you trust, this shouldn't be a problem. You can leave instructions for your pet's care in a separate document. Learn more about [naming a beneficiary for your pet in your will or trust](#) on Nolo.com.

### *Creating a Pet Trust*

A pet trust is an estate planning tool you can use to create a legal obligation to care for your pet. In the trust document, you name a person to care for your pet, you provide instructions for your pet's care, and you leave money for that purpose.

When you die, the person named as trustee will get the money and the pet. However (unlike a provision in a will or living trust), under a pet trust, the trustee will have to follow your instructions and use the money only for the care of your pet. Learn more about using a [pet trust](#) on Nolo.com.

### *Charitable Programs That Provide Homes for Pets*

It's often tough to find someone both willing and able to take care of a pet. Responding to that need, a few programs have sprung up across the country to ensure that pets will have a loving home when their owners can no longer care for them.

Some organizations find loving homes for the pets of owners, others will care for your pet for its lifetime, if you make a large (commonly, around \$10,000 to \$25,000) gift. Here are a few of these programs:

- [Peace of Mind Program](#), School of Veterinary Medicine, Purdue University, 800-830-0104.
- Perpetual Pet Care Program, Kansas State University School of Veterinary Medicine, 785-532-4378
- [Cohn Family Shelter](#), Center for Veterinary Health Sciences, Oklahoma State University, 405-744-5630
- [Stevenson Companion Animal Life-Care Center](#), College of Veterinary Medicine, Texas A&M University, 979-845-1188

### *Can You Have Your Pet Euthanized When You Die?*

If you don't want your pet to live without you, you can write a provision in your will that directs the executor of your estate to have your pet humanely destroyed, but it might not work out the way you hope.

If anyone objects to the provision in your will, the [probate court](#), which oversees the administration of your estate, will rule on the validity of the will provision. Almost always, these provisions are found to be invalid, and the court may forbid the executor from carrying out your instructions.

Courts have always frowned on wills that order the destruction of any kind of property, on the ground that it goes against public policy to needlessly destroy valuable property. Generally, the court's rationale is something like this: Someone leaves instructions in a will to euthanize a pet because of the worry that the pet will not be cared for properly or will end up in a shelter or somewhere worse. The owner wishes to prevent pain and suffering. So, if the pet is old and ill, or so attached to the owner that it couldn't adjust to a new home, the owner's request that it be humanely destroyed may make perfect sense. But if an executor has found a good home for the animal, and the animal seems well adjusted and well taken care of, a court may decide that the previous owner's wishes are best fulfilled by not carrying out the will's order.

Also, keep in mind that people who learn of your wish (your executor, other beneficiaries, family members) may question your motive for putting a

## Care for Your Pet — continued ...

provision like this in your will. They may wonder why you didn't try to arrange for your pet to go to a good home and they may try to convince your executor or the court not to follow your wishes. So, if you truly want your wish to be followed, before you die, you should try to explain your reasoning to those who might intervene.

You can learn more about [pets and estate planning](#) on Nolo.com. Updated by [Betsy Simmons Hannibal](#), Attorney via NOLO.com

We encourage you to share this newsletter with family and friends and perhaps encourage them to join us.

Donations are always welcome and can be easily made on our website: [www.ChoiceAndDignity.org](http://www.ChoiceAndDignity.org)

Tax ID# EIN- 84-4667788

Choice and Dignity, Inc., PO Box 86886,

Tucson, AZ 85754

More than one-third of nonprofit groups' income comes from bequests - generous members who want to help others after they are gone. Please consider adding us to your legacy by including us in your will.



## Readers Write

Dear Readers Write....

Fear fades as we fade.

I'm an atheist who does not believe in an afterlife at all. But I do believe in dying and death, two processes I've always been concerned about. Burying my beloved chicken, and that horned lizard we caught as children, made me aware of death.

All eight decades of my life I've watched dying and death in the natural and human world. It is frustrating not to be able to talk to most of my family and friends openly. In the last few years I helped form a little group we call the Death Sisters, or the DNRs (do not resuscitate) We talk about death and dying whenever we meet. Yes, that's our focus.

We are getting familiar with our coming deaths and also, what seems more difficult, grief. We four have different beliefs and backgrounds but all of us would rather have Death a friend, not a foe. Over our few years getting together, we've taken on getting our dying plans clearer. We've chosen helpers who know what we aim for as we fade. We've filled out and discussed our "Five Wishes" and other forms that help us concentrate on ways and means of finding a better way to live and die.

Doing this paper work has had fun moments as we have to prod and push one another to think things through. We tease and laugh as we formulate outlandish plans for how to die and how to live life more fully.

I recommend getting together with a friend or two who are willing to talk, read, watch films, and attend meetings about dying and death. Fear fades as we fade in a congenial way.

Jeannette Hanby

*Thanks Jeanette, for such a thoughtful and useful idea for all of us who struggle with working through our own ideas and questions as we put together our end of life papers and wishes. As you mentioned, family members are not always receptive to preparing for death. I'm inviting others to share and write me a letter to put in our next newsletter. J'Fleur*



## Volunteer Opportunities

Many hands make light work, and we need more volunteers to help with several endeavors.

### Exit Café Facilitators or Mortality Movie Host — Discussion Leader

Would you like to help people discuss issues related to death? We can provide training. Minimal time donation is less than a day per quarter, plus preparation time.

### Grant Writer

Do you have grant writing experience? We need someone to write applications for grants. With your help, we can obtain the necessary resources to expand our programs and reach more people in need.

**Time Commitment:** A few hours a month.

#### Responsibilities:

- **Research:** Identify and research prospective grant opportunities from foundations, corporations, and government entities.
- **Proposal Writing:** Write, edit, and submit grant proposals and letters of inquiry.
- **Documentation:** Prepare and organize supporting documentation for grant submissions.
- **Reporting:** Monitor and report on the status of submitted proposals and track the outcomes.

#### Qualifications:

- Strong writing and editing skills with attention to detail.
- Ability to research and synthesize information from various sources.
- Experience with grant writing or proposal writing is highly desirable.
- Ability to meet deadlines and manage multiple projects simultaneously.
- Excellent organizational and communication skills.

### Webmaster & Social Media Guru

Are you skilled at website management and social media? You could help develop our presence. With your help, we can reach more people, raise awareness, and mobilize support for our cause.

**Time Commitment:** 1-2 hours per week

#### Responsibilities:

- **Website Maintenance:** Help to update our website with resources for our membership. Working knowledge of FlipCause useful but not required.

- **Content Creation:** Develop, curate, and schedule engaging content across our limited social media presence (MeetUp, NextDoor and Facebook).

- **Community Engagement:** Respond to comments and messages, engage with followers, and foster a positive community.

- **Campaigns:** Assist in planning and executing social media campaigns and events.

#### Qualifications:

- Understanding of various social media platforms. MeetUp, and FaceBook in particular.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to work independently.
- Previous experience in social media management or digital marketing is highly desirable.

### Legislative Outreach Coordinator

Are you passionate about making a difference in your community? Do you have a knack for understanding policy and a desire to engage with lawmakers? With your help, we can ensure that our cause receives the attention it deserves from our lawmakers and policymakers. Help us amplify our voice in the legislative arena.

**Time Commitment:** 1 hr. a week with occasional busy periods during legislative sessions.

#### Responsibilities:

- **Research & Analysis:** Monitor and analyze local, state, and federal legislation that impacts our mission.
- **Advocacy:** Develop and implement strategies to advocate for our policy positions.
- **Relationship Building:** Establish and maintain relationships with legislators, their staff, and other key stakeholders.
- **Communication:** Draft letters, emails, and other communication to policymakers.
- **Coordination:** Organize and coordinate meetings, phone calls, and events with legislators.
- **Reporting:** Provide regular updates to the team on legislative activities and progress.

#### Qualifications:

- Strong interest in public policy and advocacy.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Basic understanding of legislative processes
- Previous experience in legislative affairs, government, or advocacy is required.

Thank you for considering these volunteer opportunities. Together, we can make a lasting impact!



## MEET YOUR BOARD

### — Jim Schultz



I learned about volunteering from my Dad. He was always involved with organizations to improve the world. He was a terrific fundraiser. I lay no claim to that inheritance.

I started my volunteer work with the Jewish Vocational Service in Chicago, a non-sectarian provider of workforce development and employment services. It was there that I learned about the concept of "Tikkun Olam" or "repair of the world" - a foundational tenet of Judaism. I'm not particularly religious but Tikkun Olam stuck with me.

My relationship with Choice and Dignity developed after reading John Abraham's book and attending one of his classes. It's been a period of change and growth for us, and I am happy that I have been able to contribute.

I'm reminded of the story of the starfish...  
A young girl was walking along a beach upon which thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up, and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement. She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!"

The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied, "Well, I made a difference for that one!"

The old man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined, and all the starfish were saved.

And so it is with Choice and Dignity. We can't help everyone but we do make a difference to those we serve.

*Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.*  
—The Talmud

### Choice & Dignity Board

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Richard MacDonald, MD	Elizabeth Smith, Esq.
Steve Miller, MD	Colleen Whitaker, MA

### 2024 Board Meeting Schedule

Saturday August 17, October 12

All meetings 5 — 6:30 pm AZ time, via Zoom

To participate, please click here:

[mailto:ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com?subject=I'd Like to Attend the Board of Directors Meeting](mailto:ChoiceandDignityInc@gmail.com?subject=I'd+Like+to+Attend+the+Board+of+Directors+Meeting) to request a Zoom link for the meeting.

### Become a Member

Although we are a volunteer organization, we do incur expenses. You can help by becoming a paid member or sending a contribution.

Scan the QR code to go to our website

