Choice and Dignity – October 2026 - Quarterly Newsletter

Welcome

I'm going to depart from our normal format for a bit because, unless you have been living under a rock, you know elections are coming up.

So first, the technical stuff. I'm providing you with a link to Robert Ojeda's most recent note in the Pima Council On Aging bi-monthly magazine. Robert is the CEO of PCOA. He impresses me every time I hear him speak and I think he has done a wonderful job explaining the ins and outs of this election season.

Read it here: https://online.flippingbook.com/view/256319608/2/

Secondly, I want to give you some insight into the candidates and their thoughts about end-of-life issues. Board Member David Swift helped us build and distribute a candidate questionnaire. We sent it to almost 160 candidates for the State House and Senate positions. We got back 29. While that may not be anything to write home about, as surveys go it is a pretty good response rate.

The good news: The candidates shared their **positions on critical topics** such as **Medical Aid in Dying (MAID)**, the availability of hospice and palliative care, and the needs of unpaid family caregivers. Many respondents emphasized the importance of **personal autonomy, dignity, and compassion**, while also highlighting the necessity for **rigorous safeguards** to protect vulnerable individuals. Additionally, several participants express a desire for **further education and information** regarding healthcare policies across different states and nations.

The Best News: **None of the respondents were opposed to Medical Aid in Dying becoming legal in Arizona.**

The bad news: I need to tip-toe carefully here as we are a non-profit and need to maintain our neutrality. So please read the next bit as a statement of fact and not a condemnation.

Of the 29 surveys we received back, one was from a Green Party candidate, one was from a Republican candidate, and 27 were from Democratic candidates. Assuming there was a 50/50 split of candidates the Republican response rate was .0125%, and the Democratic response rate was about 34%. Make of that what you will as you make your voice heard in November.

Ultimately, the survey will serve as a platform for us to provide education to all our legislators to help them develop their thinking **on serious illness, healthcare access, and end-of-life legislation** in Arizona.

- You can see the unedited responses here: **Candidate Questionnaire Findings:** Fall 2026 Arizona Candidate Questionnaire - Health Care & End-of-Life Issues (Responses)

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, October10, 2026**.

Martha Cooper Library 1377 N Cataline Ave Tucson AZ 85712

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 — "Facing Death"

  FRONTLINE gains access to the ICU of one of New York's biggest hospitals to examine the complicated reality of today's modern, medicalized death. Here, we find doctors and nurses struggling to guide families through the maze of end-of-life choices they now confront: whether to pull feeding and breathing tubes, when to perform expensive surgeries and therapies or to call for hospice. The film also offers an unusually intimate portrait of patients facing the prospect of dying in ways that they might never have wanted or imagined.

  Ekstrom Columbus Library -
  Saturday, November 14th,
  Doors open: 2:15
  Viewing from 2:30- 3:30
  Discussion from 3:30 to 4:15 pm.
- 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.

This series of five 2-hour sessions will help you prepare for death, yours, or a loved one.

There are Five Primary topics:

- Introduction to Death, the Right-to-Die Movement, and Your Values
- Advanced Directives – Your decisions about the types of care and life-sustaining measures you may or may not want.
- Medical Advocacy – How to ensure your wishes are honored. We'll cover both choosing your advocate as well as being a good advocate for someone else.
- Communication with Family, Loved Ones, and Medical Providers – How to start and have the necessary conversations.
- Deliberate Life Completion – We'll discuss the what, where, and how Medical Aid in Dying and other methods to reduce suffering where MAID is not a viable alternative. In addition, we'll discuss neurodegenerative diseases and their impact on the Life Completion process as well as other "to-do's" for your list in preparation for death.

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.

Reserve your space here: mailto:info+HTGTDYW@choiceanddignity.org

Upcoming Partner Local Tucson Events

EVENTS AT OLLI – The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

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.

Roots and Roads Presents

Palliative Care is often misunderstood, yet it plays a vital role in supporting people living with serious illness. What exactly is palliative care—and what is it not? In this interview-style conversation, Dr. Amy Klein, a Palliative Medicine physician, will explore how palliative care helps patients and families navigate complex medical decisions, manage symptoms, and focus on quality of life. Together, we will discuss how to communicate with doctors about diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment options; how to talk with loved ones; and how to think about choices when the future feels uncertain. The session will also clarify how palliative care differs from and connects to hospice care, and what to expect as care needs evolve over time.

In the News

International News

- **Dignity South Africa:** DignitySA has lodged a constitutional challenge to decriminalize medical assistance in dying, noting encouraging public support for patient rights. Read more
- **Global Media Watch:** Sign up for the weekly VAD Media Watch newsletter from Australia, which provides relevant, curated links to end-of-life stories worldwide. Read more
- **Canadian Investigation:** A Canadian man admitted to sending "suicide packets" to hundreds globally, highlighting ongoing international concerns regarding the regulation of end-of-life substances. Read more
- **Dutch Citizens' Initiative:** The Stichting Levenseinderegie submitted a proposal to the Dutch House of Representatives with 70,000 signatures seeking to expand end-of-life autonomy and management. Read more
- **South Africa Court Update:** DignitySA's court case has entered a new phase, with all four respondents confirming opposition and a formal court timetable now established. Read more
- **Vatican Stance:** Pope Francis recently characterized assisted dying as "false compassion" during a visit to the Lourdes shrine in France, reinforcing Catholic opposition to end-of-life legislation. Read more
- **WFRtDS Quarterly Launch:** The World Federation of Right to Die Societies is launching a new international digital publication to strengthen global connections and share vital movement updates. Sign up

National News

- **Alabama Execution Ruling:** A federal judge blocked Alabama from executing a man using nitrogen gas, a significant ruling regarding controversial methods of capital punishment. Read more
- **Opposition Exposed:** Investigative reporting into the Patients' Rights Action Fund reveals how these organizations disguise religious agendas to dismantle Death with Dignity laws nationwide. Read more
- **Federal Advocacy:** Compassion & Choices has officially endorsed the Compassionate Care Act, federal legislation reintroduced in Congress designed to significantly expand access to advance care planning. https://tinyurl.com/2sfb2syx

State News

- **Virginia Decriminalization:** A new bill decriminalizing suicide in Virginia aims to support families but raises complex ethical questions from a Catholic perspective. Read more
- **Colorado Plea Deal:** A Colorado woman accepted a plea deal following manslaughter charges related to her mother's assisted suicide, highlighting the importance of legal boundaries. Read more
- **Illinois Policy:** Medical aid-in-dying legislation is now officially in effect in Illinois; advocates suggest reviewing the state-specific packet for details on implementation and patient access. https://www.aclu-il.org/know-your-rights/know-your-rights-medical-aid-in-dying/

Research News

- **Parkinson's Medication:** The FDA has approved AbbVie's Juvmo, a new medication for Parkinson's disease treatment; experts suggest monitoring its availability and impact on current patients. Read more
- **Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED) as a Pathway to MAiD:** A scholarly debate: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/42709459/

Board News & Meetings

The Board meets bi-monthly on the 2nd Saturday. Our next meeting will be **Saturday, October 10th.**

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

Resources & Expert Advice

- **Digital Death Cleaning:** Learn to secure your digital footprint—passwords, accounts, and social media—to ensure your legacy is managed with clarity and dignity. https://jenniferaobrien.com/at-peace-toolkit
- **Death Literate Children:** View a Roots and Roads webinar recording featuring Anita Hannig on how to have thoughtful conversations about mortality with children rather than shielding them. Read more
- **Tucson Legacy Resources: Memory Lab at UofA:** The UofA Library Memory Lab offers free equipment and guidance to help seniors preserve digital memories, including converting old VHS, film, and audio to digital. Visit Lab
- **Dying at Home Debate:** A recent *New York Times* article sparks discussion on whether hospital palliative care might be a better setting than home for complex symptoms. https://www.nytimes.com/2026/09/28/opinion/hospital-good-death.html?unlocked_article_code=1.E1E.KAt1.Fwoqn-Wn3_3R&smid=url-share
- **Supporting Bereaved Clients:** New resources are available to help employers and families support bereaved individuals as they navigate the transition of returning to the workplace.

  https://www.griefsupportcenter.com/videos/grief-in-the-workplace-why-work-feels-hard-after-loss

Media Resources You Can Use

- **Film of the Quarter:** Anthony Minghella's "***The English Patient"*** is highlighted in the latest newsletter by Prof. Willem Landman as a meaningful selection for end-of-life reflection. Read more
- **Film of the Quarter:** "***Andre is an Idiot***." A thought-provoking cinematic choice that challenges perspectives and invites deep reflection on themes of identity and human behavior. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt34963034/reference/
- **Webinar of the Quarter: Dignity Dialogues: Living Wills**. Join us on October 15, 2026, for a free webinar dedicated to navigating the complexities of advance directives. Register
- **Book of the Quarter:** ***Before Forever After*** by Helena Dolny, featured in the latest DignitySA newsletter, explores profound insights into preparation and the end-of-life journey. Read more

Meet Your Board - **Tracy Corbin received a New Certification..**

Advaita Death Doula and Bedside Yoga Training with Molly Lannon Kenny

This certificate confirms Tracy Corbin's attendance at and participation in the 100 hour online training in Advaita Death Doula training, September - December, 2025. This intensive training includes 50 hours of direct instruction and practice online with an additional approximately 50 hours of independent study, reading and reflection in the following areas:

• Faith foundations and self-inquiry: Developing wisdom presence through the lens of Yoga and Vedanta, and related contemplative practices.

• Movement, breath and passive stretching appropriate to the condition

• Legacy and vigil planning, working with families, systems theory

• Writing end of life care plans

• Understanding profound grief and best practices for supporting people experiencing bereavement

• Understanding our role - case studies and vignettes, scope of practice, marketing

• Understanding a contemplative response to death and dying, kosha model, spiritual inquiry into death

• Specific techniques, practices, resources and legal documentation related to the end of life process

Recognized with honor by:

Molly Lannon Kenny, MS, SLP - CCC, E-RYT, IAYT

Founder, Integrated Movement Therapy, Bedside Yoga, Advaita Death Doula Training

Congratulations Tracy!

Get Involved

Volunteer with Us

We are seeking **Board Members**, **Discussion Leaders,** as well as volunteers with a few hours to spend on a project.

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

Membership is more than adding your name to a list. It is a way of standing up for the right of individuals to have meaningful choices about their own end-of-life care. It means helping create a community where people can find reliable information, thoughtful guidance, and compassionate support when facing some of life's most difficult decisions.

Following an NPR-style membership model, our paying members help support access for non-paying members, ensuring that no one is ever turned away due to financial circumstances. Your membership helps sustain educational programs, community outreach, speakers, discussions, and resources that encourage open and honest conversations about death and dying, while keeping these essential resources open to all.

Most importantly, we need members who believe in the mission and are willing to help carry it forward. Whether you contribute financially, volunteer your time, serve on the board, participate in discussions, attend programs, share information with others, or simply lend your support, your involvement strengthens our organization.

Join at our webpage: https://www.choiceanddignity.org/membership.html

Our Board of Directors and Volunteers

Name	Position
James (Jim) Schultz	President
Tracy Corbin, MPA	Vice President
Susan Becker	Treasurer
Margaret Molloy, MA	Secretary
Sally Hall, MD	Director of Member Services
Myriam Coppens, MA, LMFT	Member at Large
Stephanie Pasanen	Member at Large – Social Media Team
David Swift	Member at Large & Lead -Grassroots Lobbying
Krysta Kavanaugh	Death Café Facilitator
Nicole Smith	Social Media Moderator