

Submitter: Iria Nishimura
On Behalf Of: Oregon Association for Home Care
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1003

To the Esteemed Members of the Oregon Senate,

I am writing today to express strong opposition to Senate Bill 1003. As a dedicated advocate for hospice care, I believe this bill, if passed, would have detrimental and far-reaching consequences for the perception and delivery of vital end-of-life services across our state.

Hospice plays a crucial and distinct role in end-of-life care. We assist patients with comprehensive symptom management, ensuring comfort and dignity as they approach the end of life, regardless of whether they choose to pursue Death with Dignity. Our focus is on affirming life and regarding dying as a normal process, neither hastening nor postponing death.

Furthermore, hospice provides essential grief care and support to loved ones after a patient dies, including those who have chosen Death with Dignity. This bereavement support is a cornerstone of holistic end-of-life care, recognizing the profound impact of loss on families and communities.

It is important to acknowledge that many hospices already provide factual, neutral information about the Death with Dignity Act as part of comprehensive end-of-life counseling, allowing patients to make informed decisions that align with their values and beliefs. However, the requirement to proactively inform every patient about participation in the Death with Dignity Act, as proposed by SB 1003, fundamentally alters the nature of this delicate balance. Our work in advocating for and educating the public about the true benefits of hospice care would be severely threatened.

A persistent misconception exists that hospice hastens death. This belief persists despite extensive research and evidence demonstrating that hospice care often extends life, improves quality of life, and provides invaluable support to patients and their families. Mandating that hospices initiate discussions about Death with Dignity with every patient would undoubtedly fuel this dangerous misconception. If the public perceives every hospice as intrinsically tied to the Death with Dignity Act due to a state-mandated education requirement, public opinion could be swayed to believe more strongly than ever that hospice interferes with the normal dying process and actively hastens death, akin to participation in Death with Dignity. This misperception would erode trust in hospice providers, making patients and families less likely to seek out our services. This would be a tragic outcome, as it would deny countless Oregonians access to the compassionate care, pain management, and emotional and spiritual support that hospice so uniquely provides during their most vulnerable

time.

I urge you to consider the profound negative impact Senate Bill 1003 would have on the ability of hospices to serve our communities effectively and to maintain public trust. Please vote no on Senate Bill 1003.

Thank you for your time and consideration.