

Testimony in Opposition to SB 1003

My name is Dr. James Peipon, MD. I am a pediatrician with a background in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. During my medical career I have had the privilege to care for children with terminal illnesses.

The parents of children with any health concern seek the advice and care of a physician first and foremost to prolong life and bring physical healing to their child. When a child dies parents grieve the loss of their child. Indeed, when any person dies, people experience the loss of presence and ability to communicate with the person they love. They mourn the loss of time to complete unfulfilled dreams.

I oppose SB 1003 because it decreases the opportunity for important discussions between patients, their families, and their healthcare provider in three significant ways.

First, it shortens the existing 15 day waiting period significantly undermining the critical time for evaluation and discussion needed to have those discussions particularly between patients and family to bring closure and healing to the whole family and others known to the patient.

Second, it requires healthcare facilities to mandate promotion of assisted suicide. This is a problem, particularly for the vulnerable, which are guided towards death, rather than care. In today's healthcare we can provide compassionate care which maximizes the opportunities for discussions between all family members allowing for psychological healing to occur.

Third, by broadening the definition of who can prescribe lethal drugs, the potential for abuse and removal of safeguards is increased. The healthcare provider involved with end of life discussions should be the physician who knows the family the best and understands the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual issues involved with a particular patient.

James J. Peipon, MD