

Kimberly Bailey-Shaw, DC
Bryant Pond
LD 613

LD 613 Testimony from Kimberly Bailey-Shaw, DC

In September 2021, my husband, John, was diagnosed with stage 4 Metastatic Melanoma. His diagnosis was discovered after a grand Mal seizure and subsequent CT scans. At the time of his diagnosis, John had seven brain tumors and multiple lung tumors. He made a decision pretty quickly to use his DWD rights and we signed up under MaineGeneral Palliative Care. The protocol was explained to us at the time of his initial visit with Palliative care.

John's cancer treatment slowed the progress but did not stop the devastating seizures which came when his brain was overwhelmed or he was tired.

In July, 2022, John's seizures were becoming more frequent and severe. He opted to start Hospice care and proceed with the other protocol for his DWD wishes. Here became the problem. Due to scheduling issues with the social worker who came to do his Psych evaluation, we waited for almost a week to get that done. Then, we were getting close to a weekend and had trouble getting the MD to the house to sign paperwork and get the prescription for John's life ending medication. The week was fraught with anxiety that John would have a devastating seizure that often left him unable to speak and he would not pass the final phases of the law. Had LD 613 been amended to allow his PCP to waive the waiting periods at the end, John's last week could have been the quiet time with his family that he deserved at the end of his life. Instead, in a panic, we had to call on a dear friend who owned the pharmacy. This friend had his pharmacist come in very late on a Friday night to make up John's prescription. If we had not had the help of his pharmacist friend, John would have had to wait three more days to get his medication. I do not believe he would have made it through the weekend without more horrific seizures. This is not a dignified way to die....waiting for professionals to arrive and arbitrary time frames to pass. By waiving the wait, his primary care physician could have expedited this process and the stress of wondering if John would be able to pass the tests, would have been alleviated.

My advice to others entering this process is get all the waiting periods out of the way immediately....if you have time. Some patients do not have time and want their suffering to end immediately. This is where the patient and their doctor should have the right to waive the waiting periods that they may not survive. The waiting periods are designed to protect patients but in the end they cause more stress and harm.

Please consider waiving these waiting periods before more patients end their lives suffering needlessly.

Sincerely,
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