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LD 613

I'm writing in support of LD 613 giving medical providers the ability to waive the waiting period for Death With Dignity.

First, I speak as a hospice RN. I cannot put into words the agony that patients and families suffer when a person who wants DWD dies before they can participate. Many folks come to this difficult decision as they near end of life, which is never a predictable moment. Many people want to stay as long as they can and hold off taking the medication hoping for every moment with their families and loved ones. However, their condition can suddenly and dramatically deteriorate. In these situations, every moment counts and even a brief delay will rob them of dying in the manner they choose.

Second, I speak as a family member. My dear youngest brother was just - unexpectedly - diagnosed with terminal stage IV metastatic cancer. A couple of hours after he learned this, he was in tears, saying, "I don't want to do this," meaning the loss of control over how his life will end. "I wish Maine had something where I could put an end to it" He was inconsolable. When I told him that Maine DOES have this option, his whole body relaxed, the grimace on his face disappeared and now he's enthusiastically embracing palliative chemo in hopes of more time among the living, knowing that he'll be able to "end it" when it's time. Because of his disease, he may very well be one of those folks who will need to make a sudden decision to take the medication.

Please give medical providers the option of a clinically-based decision to spare folks from unnecessary suffering.

Thank you.