MEDICAL SOCIETY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Resolution 2017 - 163

Introduced by: Third and Fourth Districts

Subject: Survey: New York Physicians’ Attitudes toward Medical Aid in Dying

Referred to: Reference Committee on Public Health and Education

Whereas, the Medical Society of the State of New York exists to serve as a resource for its members and assist them in addressing the many issues and needs which they face in providing health care to their patients; and

Whereas, medical aid in dying is a practice that authorizes terminally ill adults in the last six months of life with decision-making capacity to request a prescription medication which they may self-administer to bring about a peaceful death if and when their suffering becomes intolerable; and

Whereas, an act to authorize medical aid-in-dying [bill # A-02382/S03151] is being considered in the New York state legislature; and

Whereas, six states (OR, WA, MT, VT, CA, CO) and the District of Columbia currently authorize medical aid in dying for terminally ill residents; and

Whereas, experience from almost two decades of rigorously observed and documented experience in Oregon demonstrates that the law has worked as intended, with no evidence of abuse; and

Whereas, public support for medical aid-in-dying is growing as evidenced by a 2015 survey of New York residents that showed 77% favor medical aid-in-dying as an end-of-life option; and

Whereas, surveys of physicians nationally, as well as in Colorado and Maryland, show majority support for medical aid-in-dying as an end-of-life option; and

Whereas, the New York State Academy of Family Physicians withdrew its opposition to medical aid in dying in favor of a neutral public policy stance at its 2016 Congress; and

Whereas, in response to a resolution introduced at the 2016 Annual House of Delegates Meeting, the American Medical Association’s Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs is studying medical aid-in-dying as an end-of-life option, including consideration of data from states that currently authorize the practice and input from physicians who have provided medical aid-in-dying to qualifying patients; and

Whereas, MSSNY is the second-largest component of the AMA and whose AMA delegates will have the opportunity to provide input to the CEJA’s report and vote on its recommendation at the 2017 AMA Annual Meetings; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Medical Society of the State of New York conduct a membership (may substitute “physician”) survey to determine their attitudes toward medical aid-in-dying with a report of findings to the MSSNY House of Delegates.