

# HAWAII FAMILY FORUM

## 2004 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE WATCH

### Hawaii Palliative Care and Pain Management Act (HB 917)

Hawaii Palliative Care and Pain management Act (HB 917) is a bill designed to devote necessary resources and adopt polices giving "all citizens of Hawaii access to highest possible quality of palliative care and pain management." The bill allows doctors to give enough medication, within expert guidelines, to relieve pain without fear of prosecution, while prohibiting physician-assisted suicide. The bill passed one committee last session and was carried over. While this bill has a long way to go, it deserves our support. Hawaii's Partnership for Appropriate & Compassionate Care (HPACC) and HFF are in full support of this measure. Stay tuned as we monitor the progress of this piece of legislation during the 2004 session. Other bills include: Relating to Death with Dignity (SB 391 / HB 862) that allows a terminally ill, competent adult to get a lethal dose of medication to end life. HFF continues to OPPOSE these bills, and any attempt to legalize PAS in Hawaii.

### Reasons to Oppose Physician-Assisted Suicide (PAS)

- **VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE:** PAS sends the messages that some lives are not worth living.
- **DUTY TO DIE:** Very quickly "right to die" will become a duty to die for the vulnerable in our society.
- **SEEK COMPASSIONATE ALTERNATIVES, NOT DEATH:** In the last 35 years, major advancements have been made in the area of palliative or comfort care, which provides comprehensive end-of-life care for patients and their families including physical, emotional, social and spiritual care. Experts report that pain can be relieved for 95% of patients.
- **TREAT DEPRESSION:** Physicians are not trained to recognize or treat the severe depression some experience when facing the end of life. Patients who are not depressed do not want to die.
- **DESTRUCTION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATIENT AND DOCTOR:** The very idea of PAS threatens to destroy the delicate trust relationship between doctor and patient.
- **OPENING THE DOOR TO ABUSE:** The elderly, the disabled and the poor are at great risk.
- **BROAD COALITION AGAINST PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH:** Hawaii Medical Association, Hawaii Nurses Association, Hospice Hawaii, The Arc in Hawaii, Healthcare Association of Hawaii, Hawaii Catholic Conference, HFF and many others are against PAS.

### OTHER LEGISLATION

#### Gambling Legislation

HFF will continue to OPPOSE any attempt to legalize any form of commercial gambling in Hawaii. Hawaii remains only 1 of 2 states that have NO form of legalized gambling. Let's keep it that way!

#### Ice Problem in Hawaii

HFF will SUPPORT measures introduced that work to stop our families from becoming addicted to ice or aiding them in the healing and recovery process.

#### Emergency Contraceptives (HB 189 HD2 SD1)

HFF OPPOSES legislation that forces religious institutions to prescribe emergency contraceptives when it is against its religious tenets.

#### Newborn Safe Haven (HB 133 HD1 SD3 CD1)

HFF SUPPORTS legislation that provides immunity from prosecution for mothers that leave an unharmed newborn at a hospital.

Visit our website at: [http://www.hawaiifamilyforum.org/legislature\\_2004/updates/index.php](http://www.hawaiifamilyforum.org/legislature_2004/updates/index.php) to stay informed on the issues.

6301 Pali Highway  
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224  
Phone: (808) 230-2100 Fax: (808) 230-2102  
E-Mail: [info@hawaiifamilyforum.org](mailto:info@hawaiifamilyforum.org)

# HAWAII FAMILY FORUM

## 2004 LEGISLATIVE ISSUE WATCH

### Hawaii Palliative Care and Pain Management Act (HB 917)

Hawaii Palliative Care and Pain management Act (HB 917) is a bill designed to devote necessary resources and adopt polices giving "all citizens of Hawaii access to highest possible quality of palliative care and pain management." The bill allows doctors to give enough medication, within expert guidelines, to relieve pain without fear of prosecution, while prohibiting physician-assisted suicide. The bill passed one committee last session and was carried over. While this bill has a long way to go, it deserves our support. Hawaii's Partnership for Appropriate & Compassionate Care (HPACC) and HFF are in full support of this measure. Stay tuned as we monitor the progress of this piece of legislation during the 2004 session. Other bills include: Relating to Death with Dignity (SB 391 / HB 862) that allows a terminally ill, competent adult to get a lethal dose of medication to end life. HFF continues to OPPOSE these bills, and any attempt to legalize PAS in Hawaii.

### Reasons to Oppose Physician-Assisted Suicide (PAS)

- **VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE:** PAS sends the messages that some lives are not worth living.
- **DUTY TO DIE:** Very quickly "right to die" will become a duty to die for the vulnerable in our society.
- **SEEK COMPASSIONATE ALTERNATIVES, NOT DEATH:** In the last 35 years, major advancements have been made in the area of palliative or comfort care, which provides comprehensive end-of-life care for patients and their families including physical, emotional, social and spiritual care. Experts report that pain can be relieved for 95% of patients.
- **TREAT DEPRESSION:** Physicians are not trained to recognize or treat the severe depression some experience when facing the end of life. Patients who are not depressed do not want to die.
- **DESTRUCTION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PATIENT AND DOCTOR:** The very idea of PAS threatens to destroy the delicate trust relationship between doctor and patient.
- **OPENING THE DOOR TO ABUSE:** The elderly, the disabled and the poor are at great risk.
- **BROAD COALITION AGAINST PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED DEATH:** Hawaii Medical Association, Hawaii Nurses Association, Hospice Hawaii, The Arc in Hawaii, Healthcare Association of Hawaii, Hawaii Catholic Conference, HFF and many others are against PAS.

### OTHER LEGISLATION

#### Gambling Legislation

HFF will continue to OPPOSE any attempt to legalize any form of commercial gambling in Hawaii. Hawaii remains only 1 of 2 states that have NO form of legalized gambling. Let's keep it that way!

#### Ice Problem in Hawaii

HFF will SUPPORT measures introduced that work to stop our families from becoming addicted to ice or aiding them in the healing and recovery process.

#### Emergency Contraceptives (HB 189 HD2 SD1)

HFF OPPOSES legislation that forces religious institutions to prescribe emergency contraceptives when it is against its religious tenets.

#### Newborn Safe Haven (HB 133 HD1 SD3 CD1)

HFF SUPPORTS legislation that provides immunity from prosecution for mothers that leave an unharmed newborn at a hospital.

Visit our website at: [http://www.hawaiifamilyforum.org/legislature\\_2004/updates/index.php](http://www.hawaiifamilyforum.org/legislature_2004/updates/index.php) to stay informed on the issues.

6301 Pali Highway  
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224  
Phone: (808) 230-2100 Fax: (808) 230-2102  
E-Mail: [info@hawaiifamilyforum.org](mailto:info@hawaiifamilyforum.org)

# HAWAII FAMILY FORUM

January, 2004

## LIFE, AS WE KNOW IT

What do we know about life? We know that life is sacred, don't we?

During January 19-23, Sanctity of Life Week, a specific week set aside (should be daily) to focus on how really sacred life is, we should give thought to life. Life IS sacred. ALL life. All life is sacred because 1) God made it; 2) God protects it; and 3) God values it. As children of God, shouldn't we also value life? Yet that is not what we value in America today --not life as we know it. Our public policies and laws do not reflect an intrinsic value for life.

Seeing God's take on life, how can we devalue and destroy it so recklessly? Life IS sacred.

- **This means the life of unborn children.** Irrespective of court decisions and media twists, we know that unborn babies are "persons," living human beings with a heartbeat AND a purpose. We were each knit together in our mother's womb by God. Psalm 139-13-16. Since 1973, however, OVER 43 MILLION unborn children have been put to death in America. Yet we do not stand up for them because it is not politically correct to do so.
- **This means the life of the elderly.** No matter how aged or frail. We must respect and honor God's continuous purpose. Because God is the giver and sustainer of life, He is the taker of life as well. How can we let others decide to take someone's life? When life ends is God's job, one He is powerful enough to handle it. We are ***not*** talking about unnecessary suffering. Palliative care (the integrated approach of giving physical, emotional, social and spiritual comfort and quality of life during incurable illness) is a growing area of modern medicine. Enhanced and improved technologies have emerged over the last 35 years. Making people comfortable at the end of life is now, more than ever, possible, available and demanded. According to the New England Journal of Medicine, 95% of patients can be relieved of pain. Moreover, the real problem with the ***perceived*** desire to die is depression, not pain. A number of studies show that the vast majority of those requesting aid to die are clinically depressed. Moreover, their treating physicians often do not know how to diagnosis or treat depression.
- **This means the life of the vulnerable.** Who are we to decide that someone's life is not worth living? Have we lived in their skin even for a moment to determine whether they feel love or joy or happiness? How can anyone determine a brain-damaged infant is better off dead? How can another human being decide the world would be better without a particular individual simply because s/he is different? Does a chair or tubes define life to the Creator? To us? If we allow physicians to begin killing patients, the concept WILL expand and soon the disabled, the mentally ill and the poor will be among those at risk. Remember, 30 years ago no one imagined partial birth abortion would be part of the equation.

God, help us to realize how precious every life is to you. Help us seek to follow your example. Give us wisdom and strength and courage to stand up for life as we know it, your creation, everyday.

J. Denice von Gnechten is the Executive Director of Hawaii Family Forum.

6301 Pali Highway  
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224  
Phone: (808) 230-2100 Fax: (808) 230-2102  
E-Mail: [info@hawaiifamilyforum.org](mailto:info@hawaiifamilyforum.org)

# HAWAII FAMILY FORUM

January, 2004

## LIFE, AS WE KNOW IT

What do we know about life? We know that life is sacred, don't we?

During January 19-23, Sanctity of Life Week, a specific week set aside (should be daily) to focus on how really sacred life is, we should give thought to life. Life IS sacred. ALL life. All life is sacred because 1) God made it; 2) God protects it; and 3) God values it. As children of God, shouldn't we also value life? Yet that is not what we value in America today --not life as we know it. Our public policies and laws do not reflect an intrinsic value for life.

Seeing God's take on life, how can we devalue and destroy it so recklessly? Life IS sacred.

- **This means the life of unborn children.** Irrespective of court decisions and media twists, we know that unborn babies are "persons," living human beings with a heartbeat AND a purpose. We were each knit together in our mother's womb by God. Psalm 139-13-16. Since 1973, however, OVER 43 MILLION unborn children have been put to death in America. Yet we do not stand up for them because it is not politically correct to do so.
- **This means the life of the elderly.** No matter how aged or frail. We must respect and honor God's continuous purpose. Because God is the giver and sustainer of life, He is the taker of life as well. How can we let others decide to take someone's life? When life ends is God's job, one He is powerful enough to handle it. We are ***not*** talking about unnecessary suffering. Palliative care (the integrated approach of giving physical, emotional, social and spiritual comfort and quality of life during incurable illness) is a growing area of modern medicine. Enhanced and improved technologies have emerged over the last 35 years. Making people comfortable at the end of life is now, more than ever, possible, available and demanded. According to the New England Journal of Medicine, 95% of patients can be relieved of pain. Moreover, the real problem with the ***perceived*** desire to die is depression, not pain. A number of studies show that the vast majority of those requesting aid to die are clinically depressed. Moreover, their treating physicians often do not know how to diagnosis or treat depression.
- **This means the life of the vulnerable.** Who are we to decide that someone's life is not worth living? Have we lived in their skin even for a moment to determine whether they feel love or joy or happiness? How can anyone determine a brain-damaged infant is better off dead? How can another human being decide the world would be better without a particular individual simply because s/he is different? Does a chair or tubes define life to the Creator? To us? If we allow physicians to begin killing patients, the concept WILL expand and soon the disabled, the mentally ill and the poor will be among those at risk. Remember, 30 years ago no one imagined partial birth abortion would be part of the equation.

God, help us to realize how precious every life is to you. Help us seek to follow your example. Give us wisdom and strength and courage to stand up for life as we know it, your creation, everyday.

J. Denice von Gnechten is the Executive Director of Hawaii Family Forum.

6301 Pali Highway  
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224  
Phone: (808) 230-2100 Fax: (808) 230-2102  
E-Mail: [info@hawaiifamilyforum.org](mailto:info@hawaiifamilyforum.org)