



compassion & choices of Indiana

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Compassionandchoices-indiana.org

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WE NEED YOUR STORIES

Nothing moves us more than when someone shares their personal story, experiences, thoughtful observations and life lessons. This genuine deep relating has a special power and influence over others.

Would you please share your personal experiences and reflections on end-of-life issues with us? We hope you will tell us about both positive and negative experiences. Tell us in your own words---we're not looking for fancy accounts but for ones from the heart and sincere mind. Why is a dignified death an important hope for you? What are you doing to help achieve it?

Please mail these to Compassion & Choices of Indiana, P.O. Box 7181, Bloomington, IN, 47407, or email us at clarke.miller@comcast.net. We would like to share these with our members in this newsletter and other ways. If you wish to remain anonymous, we will respect this, also.

Thank you for helping to improve options for those having difficult deaths. And thanks to member Gail Piltz for sharing his thoughts in this issue.

MEMBER'S SHARING

Because I am an accountant I am naturally a numbers guy.

I find it rather interesting how little financial planning most people put into their future. It seems as though some

folks have the attitude they will live forever. Others may prefer to let their heirs fight it out.

Some folks do plan; some in great detail, others less. Some folks do all the right

things. They have wills, trusts, powers of attorney, health-care directives and perhaps even prepay their funeral. They can control everything before illness or injury and everything after illness or injury but may be forced to leave decisions during the interim to others who may not necessarily make the desired choices.

The option of doctor assisted dying fills a very important part of the total planning process. It provides the final element of personal control of your life at a critical time. It seems to me that in the civilized world in which we reside, doctor assisted dying is nothing less than the humane choice of those who desire it.

Gail Piltz

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Your Indiana Chapter has been active promoting more options for those experiencing difficult deaths. We had a booth at the senior health fairs in Indianapolis and Lafayette last October. That month we also participated in the student health fair at Indiana University in Bloomington. Thanks to Dick Davis and Betsy Walsh for coordinating these.

We provided talks at Indiana University in Bloomington and at Indiana University/Purdue University in Indianapolis (IUPUI) in October of last year. We provided an "Ethical Wills" workshop last November as part of the

Spirit & Place program in Indianapolis. Thanks to Susanne Gaudin for this valuable program.

This year we gave talks again at Indiana University in Bloomington in February, Indiana School of Medicine in Indianapolis in March, and at IUPUI in Indianapolis in March. In May Susanne Gaudin again presented a program on ethical wills in Indianapolis and Betsy Walsh coordinated our booth at the Senior Expo in Bloomington. In June we provided a talk on living wills at Parkside Court Retirement Center in Columbus.

FALL PROGRAM IN INDIANAPOLIS

We are fortunate to have scheduled Diane Kondrat to present an "End-of-Life Choices" workshop this fall in Indianapolis. Diane provided this very interesting and stimulating program for our members in Bloomington last year and has agreed to do it again.

Attendees last year were very complimentary about this very engaging, life-like and informative program. It will be on Saturday, November 21, at 2 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis, in "The Commons" building, 615 W. 43rd Street. Mark your calendar for this worthwhile program.

HEALTH CARE REFORM PLAN

President Barack Obama has included in his proposed health care reform a section while such discussions have been encouraged by the federal government since at least 1990, under the proposed

encouraging people to discuss with their physician their end-of-life preferences. health plan physicians would be reimbursed for their time in providing such consultation. President Obama has

stressed that each individual's preferences should be respected with no undue influence from the physician, family, lawyer or the government.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has supported this provision. They also pointed out that it would be voluntary, not mandatory, to have such discussions every five years.

Under the Bush administration in 2003, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality issued a report outlining such discussions. Earlier this year there was bi-partisan support for such a resolution. Supporters included Representative Charles Boustany, a Republican from Louisiana, who is a physician.

HELP PROMOTE OUR CAUSE

Compassion & Choices of Indiana board member Allen Grimshaw suggests that we each help promote our cause both during our life and at its end. He recommends drafting now our suggested obituary to give to our loved ones. This can be of great help later when needed since particular dates and events of our lives may otherwise not be clear to our loved ones.

Allen further suggests that we include in the obituary draft that we were a member of Compassion & Choices and supported death with dignity. He says "This is taking advantage of the last opportunity to promote our important efforts." Thanks, Allen, for this very concrete step that we can all take.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST SUPPORTS DIGNITY

The United Church of Christ supported physician assistance in dying at its national synod in June. "An individual on the threshold of death no longer has a choice between living and dying, but only the choice of how to die. We die only once, so we should chose to die well."

This church said those opposing this option should ask if God is a loving God that would prefer that people suffer when such pain can be alleviated. They pointed to Jesus' example of relieving the suffering of others. They said that life is sacred, but that simply postponing

death does not serve this belief since it may cause unnecessary suffering or loss of dignity.

"God's will does not involve suffering beyond limits of human endurance. It does not honor God to cling to an existence that has become an empty shell." It warned to beware of "a kind of biological idolatry."

Note: If churches wish to discuss this matter, someone from our organization is available to attend to serve as a resource.

For more information, contact **Compassion and Choices of
Indiana - P.O. Box 7181, Bloomington, IN 47407**

OR

Visit our Website:

www.compassionandchoices-indiana.org

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