



# compassion & choices of Indiana

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## NATIONAL PRESIDENT VISITS INDIANA

Our Indiana Chapter of Compassion & Choices was thrilled and honored to have Barbara Coombs Lee, our organization's national president, visit us in April. Ms. Lee spoke four times in Indianapolis and also met with our board of directors.

On April 6 she spoke to our members and the general public on "My Life--My Death--My Choice". She stressed our two missions. The first is to improve care for the dying which is done through litigation, education and legislation. Our second mission is to assist with difficult deaths. Counselors are available to inform and guide those persons seeking help. The goal is a death that honors who the person is and that respects their wishes.

Ms. Lee called failure to respect living wills "patient abuse" and said this abuse would end if such medical care was not reimbursed by Medicare. But the two strongest lobbies are organized medicine and organized religion.

Together they oppose people exerting their wishes at the end of life. She said physician aid in dying is not suicide or self-destruction. Rather it is self-care in a difficult dying situation. She suggested carrying a small card in our purse or wallet saying who our healthcare spokesperson(s) is and where our Advance Directives are located.

Alzheimer's presents special difficulties since it often is not "terminal", i.e., death is not expected in six months or less. A special "Dementia Provision" is available on our Indiana website ([compassionandchoices-indiana.org](http://compassionandchoices-indiana.org)). It can be found on page 19 of our Indiana Advance Directives. This provision states that if severe dementia develops, one wishes to be kept comfortable but not to be fed nor given liquid. Such a hastened death is a lawful choice and is not painful if accompanied with proper care.

Our organization stresses advocacy, service and education. Real progress is

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being made steadily. She urged us to stay committed and active. "End-of-life choice is the human liberty movement of the 21st century."

During her visit Ms. Lee also spoke at the Indiana University Mauer Law School, the I.U. School of Medicine's Palliative Care program, and at a

medical residency leadership session at the I.U. School of Medicine.

We are very grateful for Ms. Lee's wonderful visit to Indiana! Her excellent leadership of our national organization is very much appreciated.

## HAS YOUR MEMBERSHIP LAPSED?

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It is easy to overlook renewing our important memberships. Has this happened to you in regards to our organization? We value and need your continuing membership to keep you well informed about end-of-life issues and to improve options for those caught in difficult deaths.

Please renew your membership by completing the application form in this newsletter. This insures your continuing to receive valuable information from both our national and state organizations. If your membership has lapsed and you don't renew now, we will have to drop you from future mailings. Thanks!

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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Your Indiana chapter has been very active this year. We've presented four talks at Indiana University-Purdue University (IUPUI) (two on ethical wills and two on physician-assisted dying), two talks at Indiana University in Bloomington, and one at the Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis. We've spoken at three churches in Indianapolis and Bloomington. Talks were given at both the national and Bloomington Funeral Consumers Alliance. Lastly, we presented at the Bloomington Area Agency on Aging and at Concord Eagle Creek Center in Indianapolis.

We had information booths at senior health fairs in Lafayette and

Bloomington, and at the Indiana University student health fair in Bloomington. We were interviewed on community radio station WFHB in Bloomington. We also provided a talk at Brown County public library on ethical wills. This spring we again presented our interactive theater program in Bloomington.

All of these programs helped inform others about end-of-life issues and particularly about physician-assisted dying. Your membership in our national and state organizations supports our efforts. Together we are making an impact. Be sure to renew your membership when it comes due annually.

## NEW CATHOLIC HOSPITAL RULE

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The general public should be aware that a new rule for all Catholic hospitals, nursing homes, hospices and health maintenance organizations (HMOs) requires that feeding tubes not be withheld or removed from patients in cases of permanent

unconsciousness, comas or advanced dementia. In these situations the new church directive commands that church dogma be followed and that advance directives to the contrary be overruled. Compassion & Choices president Barbara

Coombs Lee said "The church has staked out a radical position on end-of-life care without the patients knowing about it. This could create 300,000 Terry Schiavo cases, the number being equal to the total of feeding tubes inserted in the United States annually."

This new policy isn't just operative for Catholics receiving care, but for anyone admitted to a Catholic facility. And in many communities the only hospital(s) available is Catholic.

If a patient's family wanted to comply with a contrary advance directive, they would have to discharge their loved one to another hospital or to home health

care in one's home. A form stating this is our wish, "My Directive Regarding Health Care Institutions Refusing to Honor My Health Care Choices" is available at **Compassionandchoices.org** or by calling 800-247-7421. This form can be added to one's advance directives.

Since Catholic institutions receive half or more of their income from Medicaid and Medicare, this new rule raises questions about the federally-protected religious freedom of patients whose advance directives are overruled. It also challenges a sacred tenet of American health care that an informed and competent person should be able to determine their end-of-life matters.

## FREE TALKS AVAILABLE

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Compassion & Choices of Indiana is ready to provide free talks on advance directives (living wills and health care power of attorney), physician assisted dying, or ethical wills (recordings of significant aspects of one's life for posterity). Retirement communities,

churches, civic clubs, senior groups, college classes, etc. have received such presentations with very positive results. To arrange such an interesting and meaningful program, email **[clarke.miller@comcast.net](mailto:clarke.miller@comcast.net)** or call 812-334-1129.

## FORT WAYNE HOSPITALS

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Several hospitals in Fort Wayne, Indiana, have replaced the designation "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) with the term "Allow Natural Death" (AND). Both terms refer to not attempting to prolong life when a person's heart stops beating or breathing stops. The new designation is preferred because it creates for patient and medical staff a more positive approach. It is about what is allowed to occur as opposed to what is not to be done.

St. Joseph and Dupont Hospitals have adopted this new language. It is more than just semantics. It is a philosophy of looking at death and dying as part of the continuum of life.

When to cure is no longer possible, caring with comfort measures becomes paramount. AND is much more than do not treat. Such patients are tended by a nurse throughout the dying process, given pain medicine and even oxygen. Many comfort measures can be included in this caring list.

## PBS PROGRAM AVAILABLE

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PBS recently presented a noteworthy program available at **<http://video.pbs.org/video/1639625115/>**. "Facing Death: Families

Make End-of-Life Choices" painted a disturbing picture of the painful and often futile procedures inflicted on cancer patients in a New York hospital.

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

**OR**

**Visit our Website:**

**[www.compassionandchoices-indiana.org](http://www.compassionandchoices-indiana.org)**

**COMPASSION & CHOICES OF INDIANA- MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Your dues include national and state membership. Dues are not tax deductible.

**Check Appropriate Membership:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual.....	\$ 45
<input type="checkbox"/> Couple.....	\$ 60
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Individual.....	\$450
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Couple.....	\$600
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation to Compassion & Choices	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation to Compassion & Choices (Indiana Chapter)	\$ _____
Total Amount Enclosed.....	\$ _____

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