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Representative Mari Cordes

Vermont State House of Representatives
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Representative Taylor Small

Vermont State House of Representatives
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Subject: Support for H.75 – Expanding Medical Aid in Dying Access

Dear Representatives Cordes and Goldman,

I am writing to express my strong support for H.75. Representative Cordes, thank you for sponsoring this important legislation to expand Medical Aid in Dying (MAID) authority to include nurse practitioners and physician assistants. As a Physician Assistant with fellowship training in hospice and palliative care medicine through Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, and as a MAID volunteer in southern Vermont, I have firsthand experience with the critical importance of expanding the qualified provider pool for end-of-life care. Vermont has the opportunity to join other states that have successfully integrated advanced practice practitioners into their MAID programs. States including Hawaii, New Mexico, and Oregon already authorize nurse practitioners and physician assistants to serve as attending or consulting clinicians in their MAID laws, recognizing our capability to provide this type of care. Their experience demonstrates that expanding the qualified provider pool maintains the same high standards of care while improving access for terminally ill patients.

In my professional experience, both nurse practitioners and physician assistants already play vital roles in providing comprehensive end-of-life care. We conduct complex medical assessments, manage symptoms, coordinate care, and engage in difficult conversations about prognosis and treatment options. Many of us have extensive training in palliative care and have developed deep expertise in supporting patients through their end-of-life journey. The current restriction limiting MAID to physicians creates an artificial barrier that can delay or impede access to care, particularly in rural areas of Vermont where advanced practice clinicians may be the primary or most accessible healthcare providers.

While I support the bill's overall intent to expand access to MAID, I would respectfully inquire whether the legislation could move forward with the inclusion of nurse practitioners

and physician assistants even if the naturopath provision requires further discussion. This approach would allow for meaningful expansion of access while addressing any concerns specific to naturopathic practice.

This thoughtful expansion of authority would maintain all existing safeguards while improving access to care. Advanced practice clinicians like myself are already trusted to make complex medical decisions, including terminal diagnoses and prognoses. We have the training and experience to fulfill all the careful requirements of Vermont's MAID law, including:

- Assessing terminal conditions and prognosis
- Evaluating decision-making capacity
- Ensuring informed consent
- Following the established protocols for requests and waiting periods
- Maintaining proper documentation

Representative Goldman, as my local representative, I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this further and share specific examples from my practice that demonstrate the importance of these proposed changes. My experience both as a healthcare provider and MAID volunteer offers a unique perspective on how this legislation would benefit Vermonters while maintaining appropriate safeguards.

Thank you both for your consideration of this important legislation. Your leadership is crucial in advancing this compassionate care option for terminally ill Vermonters.

Sincerely,

N. Ariel Brugger

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Medical Aid in Dying Volunteer, Southern Vermont Wayfinders