

1 VERMONT MEDICAL SOCIETY RESOLUTION

2 Vermont Medical Society Policy on End-of-life-Care

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4 *As adopted at the VMS Annual Meeting on November 4, 2017*

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7 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the VMS revise and update its Policy of
8 Physician Assisted Suicide to read:

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10 VERMONT MEDICAL SOCIETY POLICY ON END-OF-LIFE CARE

11 The Vermont Medical Society supports access to high quality end-of-life care.

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13 Our physicians actively endorse comprehensive palliative care, which includes: the use of state
14 of the art pain and symptom control; the provision of secure and supportive environments
15 through Hospice; and the freedom of the patient to choose or refuse all medical treatment.

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17 Physicians and other health care practitioners must aggressively respond to the needs of
18 patients at the end of life. Patients should not be abandoned once it is determined that cure is
19 impossible. Multidisciplinary interventions should be sought including specialty consultation,
20 hospice care, pastoral support, family counseling, and other modalities. Patients near the end of
21 life should continue to receive emotional support, good communication, comfort care and
22 adequate pain control. Their autonomy should be respected.

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24 Even when physicians use all the tools at hand to care for pain and suffering, a small number of
25 patients still suffer. Each of these patients is unique; each one of the patients will challenge the
26 caregiver's skills in the extreme; and each one's care should be highly individualized and
27 decided in private amongst the patient, physician and family. The Vermont Medical Society
28 recognizes that medical aid in dying, in the form of Vermont Act 39, is a legal option that could
29 be made in the context of the physician-patient relationship. Recognizing that principled
30 physicians disagree about the ethics of Act 39, the Vermont Medical Society is committed to
31 protecting its members' freedom to decide whether to participate in medical aid in dying
32 according to their own values and beliefs.

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34 The Vermont Medical Society is actively engaged in promoting initiatives that assure all dying
35 Vermonters receive good, comprehensive palliative care. These include ensuring that all
36 members of the Society become educated in the goals and techniques of palliative care and that
37 all members become adept at dealing with the dying patients' special needs.

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40 This policy shall supersede any contradictory earlier policy.