

SAPIENTIA'S BULLETIN

7 January 2019

Here is an update on the Euthanasia Bill:

We await the Justice Select Committee's Report, which will be presented to Parliament.

After receiving the Justice Select Committee's Report, Parliament will consider its recommendations but makes its own decisions.

Important points to consider include:

1. There were over 36,000 submissions to the Justice Select Committee and a preliminary analysis showed that 92% of submitters are opposed to the Bill.

2. Examples of concerns about the Bill include:

a.) Considering the high rates of relationship and elder abuse in New Zealand, there is a risk of coercion of the vulnerable.

b.) The Bill does not allow conscientious objection for organisations who don't want to be involved in euthanasia or assisted suicide.

3. The Bill is fundamentally flawed and dangerous and can't be fixed, despite any suggestions of cosmetic changes you might hear in the media. Any suggestion of removing the "grievous and irremediable medical condition" eligibility clause would not ensure a narrow scope.

4. Supporters of the Bill sometimes refer to Oregon USA as a model.

In Oregon a person is eligible to receive lethal drugs if they have been diagnosed with a "terminal disease" that is expected to "produce death within six months" - *however the official annual reports*

specifically mention some diseases that would not normally be classified as terminal illnesses, including diabetes, arthritis, Hepatitis C, endocarditis, arteritis, stenosis and sclerosis.

It has been confirmed by the Oregon Health Authority *that if a person with a chronic illness, such as diabetes, foregoes treatment such as insulin injections, for any reason (including financial reasons or suicidal ideation) and thereby is likely to die within six months, the person becomes eligible for assisted suicide.*

5. Thorough-going overseas Oxford-based research, shows that in those few jurisdictions in the world that have legalised euthanasia, over time there is a tendency for boundaries to widen and the number of cases to increase.

6. In September 2015, the British House of Commons, after careful and thorough consideration of a proposal to legalise euthanasia, overwhelmingly rejected it, with opposition to the proposal coming from across parties.