

June 10, 2025



FINGER LAKES GUILD
A CHARTERED GUILD of the Catholic Medical Association

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

On behalf of the [Finger Lakes Guild of the Catholic Medical Association](#), which represents Catholic physicians and healthcare providers in the Rochester and western Finger Lakes area, I respectfully urge you not to sign the recently approved Medical Aid in Dying (MAID) Act into law. This legislation, despite its well-intentioned motivations, carries significant medical, ethical, and societal concerns.

Medically, the legalization of assisted suicide directly conflicts with the fundamental principles outlined in medical guidelines for sound health care provision, first outlined in the ancient Hippocratic Oath and uninterruptedly re-iterated to the present time in the ethical codes of professional medical organizations. Physicians have always been entrusted with healing, comforting, and sustaining life, even in the face of terminal illness. Our profession's core identity and purpose is to heal and save life, and to alleviate terminal suffering through compassionate, comprehensive palliative and hospice care, not by deliberately ending life.

The American Medical Association (AMA), the largest professional organization representing American physicians, [reaffirmed its stance against physician-assisted suicide just this month](#), referencing [Opinion 5.7 in its Code of Medical Ethics](#):

"Physician-assisted suicide occurs when a physician facilitates a patient's death by providing the necessary means and/or information to enable the patient to perform the life-ending act. It is understandable, though tragic, that some patients in extreme duress—such as those suffering from a terminal, painful, debilitating illness—may decide that death is preferable to life. However, permitting physicians to engage in assisted suicide would ultimately cause more harm than good. Physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would pose serious societal risks."

In this guidance, the AMA highlights crucial ethical considerations, noting that physicians should aggressively respond to the needs of terminally ill patients by providing extensive comfort and support rather than assisting in ending their lives." (excerpted, and emphasis added)

Ethically, MAID risks undermining the trust inherent in the physician-patient relationship. The prospect of medical practitioners becoming agents of intentional death profoundly changes this relationship from one of mutual trust and healing to one of suspicion and anxiety. Vulnerable patients, particularly those

who are elderly, disabled, poor, or marginalized, could face subtle pressures to prematurely end their lives due to perceived burdensomeness or resource scarcity.

Societally, legalizing physician-assisted suicide communicates a troubling message that certain lives lack sufficient value or dignity, especially during times of illness, disability, or aging. Jurisdictions that have legalized assisted suicide have experienced incremental expansions of eligibility, leading to moral and ethical erosion and societal normalization of suicide as an acceptable response to suffering. For example, [a June 2025 NY Times article](#) describes the many ethical and medical dilemmas that have become evident since Canada passed their 2016 MAID legislation, which has since been incrementally expanded to include non-terminal patients. **As a result, [Health Canada reports that in 2023, an astonishing 1 in 20 deaths in Canada were MAID-initiated](#)**. This troubling trend indicates not merely a ‘slippery slope’ effect, but a paradigm collapse. There is no assurance that New York State will not experience a similar course.

Governor Hochul, your decision represents a critical juncture for New York State, setting a profound precedent regarding a diminished value placed on human life and dignity. Instead of endorsing the troubling path of assisted suicide, we urge you to champion initiatives that significantly expand compassionate end-of-life care, hospice services, and robust palliative care programs. Such an approach truly aligns with New York’s longstanding tradition of caring for its most vulnerable residents.

We respectfully request that you do not sign the MAID Act into law and instead prioritize compassionate, life-affirming healthcare policies.

Sincerely,



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