



COMPASSION & CHOICES

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Pain will be better treated under landmark legislation passed in Albany

The New York State Legislature has unanimously passed the Palliative Care Education and Training Act, AB11162, S07458A, to improve palliative care and pain management, the first of its kind in the nation. The New York State Legislature is again on the front line to ensure high quality patient centered care. Initiated by Compassion & Choices, the legislation addresses, in a number of meaningful ways, the urgent public health care crisis of the undertreatment of pain. In summary, the legislation will do the following:

- Establish a statewide advisory council on palliative care and pain management;
- Create undergraduate and graduate palliative care training programs;
- Establish state Department of Health-designated Centers for Palliative Care Excellence; and
- Authorize the Department of Health to certify one or more palliative care resource centers to assist physicians in the treatment of patients in pain

Up to \$4.5 million is authorized annually for the training programs.

“Many health care professionals are unaware of the new resources available for their patients to relieve pain,” said Assembly Health Committee Chair Richard N. Gottfried (D-Manhattan), sponsor of the Assembly bill. “This legislation will help train physicians and other professionals to relieve the suffering of thousands of New Yorkers.” I am grateful that Compassion & Choices of New York took the initiative to work with us on this important legislation.”

Senator Kemp Hannon, (R-Long Island) Chair of the Senate Health Committee and lead Senate sponsor said; “Passage of this legislation is an important step to ensure that in the future patients will get effective palliative care and pain treatment. I am excited that those with expertise in the

field across the state and across disciplines will be working with and advising the Commissioner of Health.”

Supporters of the bill included numerous medical and health care organizations, institutions and advocacy groups. The bill was crafted with significant assistance from Dr. Joseph Fins, Chief Division of Medical Ethics, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, Director of Medical Ethics, New York Presbyterian – Weill Cornell Medical Center and Dr. Russell Portenoy, Chair of Pain Medicine and Palliative Care at Beth Israel Medical Center, New York City.

Among the many other pain and palliative care experts supporting the bill and who played an instrumental role in moving the legislature to act was Dr. Diane Meier, Director, Center to Advance Palliative Care and Director, Hertzberg Palliative Care Institute at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York City. “I’m sure that my courageous patient, Denyse Dolny, would be gratified to know that her advocacy on behalf of patients contributed to the passage of this important legislation,” said Dr. Meier.

Denyse Dolny’s sister and brother, Debbie and David Dolny, in a joint statement, said, “We are elated that this legislation passed. This is a real tribute to our sister Denyse who, while receiving good care for her disease, was poorly treated for her pain until she became a patient of Dr. Meier. Passage of legislation like this was long overdue.”

Dr. Patricia A. Bomba, of Rochester, Vice President and Medical Director, Geriatrics, Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, said "This is critically important legislation. I have no doubt that the proper implementation of this bill will substantially increase the number of physicians who will be able to effectively treat the pain of their patients and provide palliative care to their seriously ill patients."

David Leven, Executive Director of Compassion & Choices of New York, said, “The medical community came together on this bill, as there was a general awareness that other efforts to improve pain and palliative care in New York have not succeeded rapidly enough.”

Compassion & Choices is a nonprofit organization working to improve care and expand choice at the end of life. As a national organization with over 60 chapters and 40,000 members, we help patients and their loved ones face the end of life with calm facts and choices of action during a difficult time. www.compassionandchoices.org