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July 1, 2025

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

Re: A136 (Assemblymember Amy Paulin)/S138 (Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal) Relates to the medical aid in dying act

Dear Governor Hochul,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the American Nurses Association - New York (ANA-NY), on behalf of our members, to strongly support A136/S138, which relates to the medical aid in dying act. This legislation will allow terminally ill, mentally capable adults with a prognosis of six months or less to live, to request medication from their doctor that they can self-administer to end their lives peacefully.

ANA-NY is a professional nursing organization representing the interests of New York State's 272,000 registered nurses. ANA-NY advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing care, supporting the professional and educational advancement of nurses, and promoting the welfare of nurses so that all people may have better health care.

ANA-NY strongly supports this legislation because nurses, especially those working in hospice or palliative care, recognize the importance of patient autonomy in making end of life decisions and the need for compassionate end of life options. According to a study done by the American Nurses Association (ANA) in 2022, 67% of nurses would care for a patient in the act of medical aid in dying, and 57% supported medical aid in dying in the context of their professional role as a nurse. ANA-NY believes that this majority support has only increased since this study was released as more information and attention has been brought to this issue in the ensuing years.

While some have argued that there are ethical questions and challenges for healthcare providers that surround medical aid in dying, we do not believe this is the case in New York as nurses will not be able to administer aid-in-dying medication. ANA-NY strongly believes that nurses must play a role in supporting this important policy decision and that no one better understands the need to honor patient autonomy in their medical decisions without judgement. Nurses are at the bedside of our patients, often seeing them at the worst times of their lives, and our goal is to help them as best we can. Sometimes that means understanding that all of the medical options to ease pain and suffering for these patients have been exhausted, and providing patients with the choice to administer aid-in dying medication is precisely the help they need to preserve their autonomy, dignity and peace at the end of their lives.

In May of this year, the two nurses elected to the New York State legislature, Assemblymember Karines Reyes and Assemblymember Phara Souffrant Forrest penned an Op Ed that perhaps best summarizes why nurses must support this legislation:

“A patient who is given a terminal diagnosis is not someone who can, with further treatment, live a little longer. Terminally ill patients are individuals that are dying. They are people who have availed themselves to all of the treatment and interventions their body can handle and are now facing the end of their life.

They are patients like those we have seen firsthand; a woman with breast cancer, who after multiple rounds of chemotherapy, comes in with a fungating breast wound where their breast literally falls off. That wound, as it continues to metastasize, spreads from their breast to their arm to their back. The wound must be dressed (cleaned) twice a day. They tell us, “Please don’t touch me anymore.” Patients like young men who we see oftentimes with esophageal cancers who have had multiple resections of their tumors. The staff can literally fit their fist through their face into their oral cavity.”

ANA-NY supports the high standards of nursing care and part of those high standards is ensuring that our patients have options and the autonomy to make decisions when they are in end of life. For these reasons, ANA-NY **strongly supports** the Medical Aid in Dying Act and urges you to sign it into law.

Sincerely,



Jeanine Santelli, Ph.D., RN, AGPCNP-BC, FAAN
Executive Director, ANA-NY