

## NAPN POLICY STATEMENT ON EUTHANASIA

WHEREAS the National Association of Pro-life Nurses acknowledges the value of all human life from conception to natural death regardless of the circumstances or physical capabilities of that life,

AND WHEREAS we reject the prevailing notion that some lives are less worthy to be lived than others,

AND WHEREAS we, as nurses in the practice of our profession, are called on to deal with human beings at all stages of development whose quality of life is considered by some to be compromised,

WE THEREFORE DECLARE that the practice of euthanasia is objectionable by our members and the following guidelines for the respectful treatment of all individuals is to be promoted:

1. The act of “mercy-killing” by which doctors or others knowingly kill individuals by a lethal dose of a drug or by other means is never justified. It is not permissible to cause or assist in one’s own death or the death of another through suicide, mercy-killing or assisted suicide.
2. Supportive nursing care must be provided to all individuals.
3. Nutrition and hydration are basic human needs and provision for those needs sometimes requires medical expertise and technology. Nutrition and hydration should not be withheld or withdrawn unless and individual is in the final stage of a terminal condition, the individual’s death is imminent, and doing so would not cause the individual’s death.
4. A competent, non-suicidal individual has the right to refuse medical treatment, but not nutrition and hydration. Medical personnel and institutions have the right to withdraw from the care of any such individuals for reasons of conscience.
5. Medical treatment should not be withheld or withdrawn from a pregnant woman if that treatment could reasonably be expected to prevent the death of her unborn child.
6. The presence or anticipation of a mental or physical disability does not justify the withholding or withdrawal of medical care.
7. Society has the right and duty to intervene on behalf of minors and other incompetent individuals where life is in jeopardy and effective treatment is available.
8. Programs are needed to address the proper care of the individual who is dying, with emphasis on emotional support and control of pain in order to make that individual’s last days as normal and comfortable as possible.

Adopted at general meeting October 27, 2000  
Approved by general vote April, 2001