

National Association of Pro-life Nurses Policy Statement on Living Wills

Whereas; the National Association of Pro-life Nurses was founded on the belief that all human life is sacred from the moment of conception until natural death, and that no other human being, regardless of the credentials he or she bears, can terminate life or hasten death,

and Whereas; we recognize the nurse's role in health care is to help the patient achieve or maintain the maximum level of well-being of the patient,

and Whereas; we believe access to the basic minimum level of nursing care is a right of all patients regardless of age, gender, location, socio-economic status, or race or any other exclusive profile,

and Whereas; the Living Will is a document originally designed by persons with the objective of encouraging patients to deny themselves this right to treatment and to have these treatments denied by others rather than to grant them,

and Whereas; the Living Will is vague in its terminology leaving much of the interpretation to those who may or may not have the best interest of the patient in mind, and that the Living Will assigns broad scope of authority in patient treatment to those persons,

and Whereas; the evolution of the Living Will document has improved little in the years since its inception to overcome these faults,

be it resolved that the National Association of Pro-life Nurses cannot endorse the use of the Living Will as a document of health care and encourages patient education to inform those in our charge of the potentially harmful effects of the document.

Be it further resolved that our members will be encouraged to counsel our patients where appropriate that:

- a) the Living Will is not a mandatory document which must be signed before appropriate health care can be delivered;
- b) signing of a Living Will must be approached with the utmost of care and information;
- c) that there are preferable alternative solutions to the signing of a Living Will; and
- d) the Living Will can, at any time after signing it, be revoked by the signer.

Adopted June 28, 2002