



## **Advocacy Matters Newsletter**

### **Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire**

**January 31, 2024**

#### **Public Hearing HB 1283 - AN ACT relative to end of life options**

**HB 1283**, legalizes physician-assisted suicides. The Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire (BIANH), an organization that supports individuals with brain injuries and family members, oppose this bill.

**Date of Public Hearing:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 10:00 am, Room 210-211

#### **Why Is BIANH In Opposition To This Bill?**

- **HB 1283 is an attempt to normalize suicide and it has scary consequences for people with disabilities, people living with chronic conditions like brain injuries, veterans, the elderly and others prone to suicide.**
- **If this bill passes, there is great potential for abuse and coercion. Vulnerable individuals, including those with chronic illness or disabilities, will likely encounter undue pressure to choose death.**
- **Suicide prevention continues to be a critical issue for the brain injury community. It is still the #1 cause of TBI fatality – surpassing falls and motor vehicle crashes. HB 1283 impedes the progress towards the goal of zero suicides in NH.**
- **Legalizing assisted suicide creates a slippery slope that jeopardizes the lives of those who cannot easily articulate their views.**

## **Steve Wade, Executive Director, Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire Op-Ed, 01/26/24**

### **Assisted Suicide Opens the Wrong Door**

Today the Granite State finds itself at a crossroads with the introduction of House Bill 1283, new legislation that seeks to legalize physician-assisted suicide (PAS). The bill effectively gives physicians permission to prescribe drugs that result in patient suicide. We have serious concerns about the bill's potential impact on New Hampshire's at-risk population if this bill passes.

Undermines suicide prevention efforts and normalizes suicide: New Hampshire has seen a nearly 50% increase in suicide rates over the past decade. Rather than addressing this with compassion and enhanced prevention efforts, HB 1283 takes us in the wrong direction by normalizing suicide as an acceptable medical option. It sends a message that suicide can be a legitimate treatment choice, contradicting the very core of our efforts to prevent suicide.

Opens the door to expanding assisted suicide to other vulnerable populations:

In other states nearly every assisted suicide law has been expanded by reducing or eliminating the waiting periods, allowing non-doctors to participate in assisted suicide, allowing assisted suicide approvals by telehealth, expanding the meaning of terminal illness, and removing the state residency requirement.

Devalues Lives of People with Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses: House Bill 1283 raises significant ethical questions about the value we place on the lives of individuals with disabilities and chronic illnesses. By endorsing PAS, we risk sending a message that some lives are not worth living. Instead of offering support and compassion through palliative care and other essential services, this bill proposes a dangerous alternative that devalues the inherent worth of those facing health challenges.

In contrast to the well-established principles of the medical profession, House Bill 1283, if passed, would turn physicians into enablers of suicide, undermining the sacred trust within the doctor-patient relationship. It will degrade public trust in healthcare, which has already fallen during the pandemic.

We cannot not ignore the recent legislative strides made in New Hampshire to bolster suicide prevention efforts. Instead of offering death through laws like HB 1283, let us continue to work toward build a "help-seeking" culture, that offers support and care for those most vulnerable and at-risk for suicide.-

Steven Wade, Concord, NH

On behalf of the NH Coalition for Suicide Prevention

## **NEXT STEPS**

OUR ORGANIZATION is opposing **HB1283, End of Life Options (aka physician-assisted suicide)**. We have multiple concerns about the negative impact this legislation could have on populations vulnerable to suicide if it passes. For more background on the issue, visit: [Take Action — NH Coalition for Suicide Prevention \(zerosuicidesnh.org\)](http://zerosuicidesnh.org)

**The first House Judiciary hearing will be held on Wed. Feb. 7th at 10:00 am. at Legislative Office Building 210-211. You can help by:**

- **Signing The “Count Us In” Pledge:** Multiple organizations have signed a pledge that includes opposing HB 1283 – End-of-Life Options. They include: ABLE NH; Brain Injury Association of NH; Catholic Medical Center; Diocese of Manchester; MOAA (Military Officers Association of America/NH Chapter); Mount Royal Academy Students; New Hampshire Hospital Association, Not Dead Yet; Patients Rights Action Fund; UNH Students for Life and the United Spinal Association.

**To add your name and/or organization to the Count Us In Pledge, click [HERE](#) and scroll down to the Pledge in the lower part of the page. Then fill out the contact form and submit it.** Upon receipt, we will review the application and add you to the Pledge.

**If you are unable to Attend the Public Hearing  
on HB 1283, You Can Sign In Online in Opposition  
on  
the General Court Website**

**Opposing House Bill 1283 Online:** To express your opposition to this bill, you can register without speaking at the hearing.

Follow these steps using the calendar sign-in form on the General Court

### Website:

1. Enter your name and contact information.
2. Click on the date of the bill hearing: **Feb 07, 2024 at 10am**
3. In the drop-down menu, choose the committee and the specific bill: **House Judiciary** and **HB 1283**  
Specify the category that best describes you (elected official, lobbyist, agency staff, member of the public, etc.).
4. Indicate that **you oppose the bill** by checking the appropriate circle.
5. Note: You can add your own testimony by typing in text or by uploading a PDF.
6. **Click "Continue."**
7. Review the provided information, check the box if correct, and *submit*.

**If you would like to testify at the hearing on Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m., please advise** Robin Schell, NH Coalition for Suicide Prevention Project Manager, at [rschell@jjwpr.com](mailto:rschell@jjwpr.com) or Teresa Rosenberger at [trosenberger@bernsteinshur.com](mailto:trosenberger@bernsteinshur.com).

Thank you!

If you have any questions, regarding HB 1283, please contact Ellen at [Ellen@bianh.org](mailto:Ellen@bianh.org)

Take care,

***Ellen***

Ellen M. Edgerly, Community Organizer

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