

compassion & choices of Colorado

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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2:00 P.M.
First Universalist Church
4101 E. Hampden Ave, Denver, CO

"DYING WISH"

A film documenting
a dying physician's
decision to die on
his own terms.



Michael Miller, M.D., died in September 2007 - on the 13th day of his fast. Due to terminal pancreatic cancer, his body had already begun the process of shutting down. He was unable to retain food without medication and had already accessed hospice services. It was at this point that he called the news editor of a Boulder, Colorado-based community radio station (KGNU-88.5 FM) to ask if a reporter would be interested in documenting his death. He planned to stop eating and drinking the next day.

His "dying wish" was to show others that what is called "patient refusal of nutrition and hydration" resulted in a gentle death.

On October 25 at 2:00 p.m., the Compassion & Choices of Colorado chapter will show this gripping film that documents Michael's last days as he shares his thoughts and experiences as death approaches.

As part of the documentary, medical ethicists speak about patients' rights, and hospice staff share their own similar experiences and those of others who have made this choice.

The film will be introduced by one of the co-producers, Karen van Vuuren; and afterwards, she will be available for audience discussion, with Colorado Board chair Peter Mayerson, M.D.

Karen van Vuuren is a former broadcast news journalist with experience working in the field of end-of-life care.

This film has been called "an extraordinary, beautifully made film of a courageous physician facing his final days with the help of a loving family and supportive hospice team."

The meeting will be held at the First Universalist Church, 4101 E. Hampden Ave., Denver. It is located on the northeast corner of Colorado and Hampden.

All are welcome. Refreshments will be served.

For further information on the program, call 303-693-0449.

DYING WISH - THE FILM MAKERS



Karen van Vuuren

Karen van Vuuren is a former broadcast news journalist with experience working in the field of end-of-life care. She is also the founder and executive director of Transitions Funeral Guidance, a non-profit organization that educates and supports families wishing to conduct home funerals.

Francesca Nicosia is a graduate student in medical anthropology at the University of Colorado Denver, where she studies the relationship between health, culture, and the environment. She also has experience working in end-of-life care and is on the Board of Directors of Natural Transitions.



Francesca Nicosia

Co-producers: Karen van Vuuren and Francesca Nicosia

Director: Karen van Vuuren

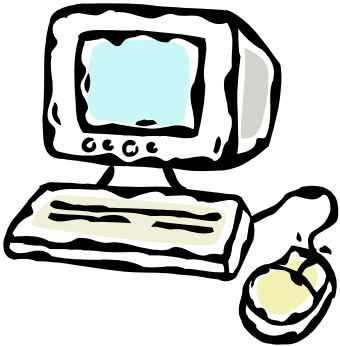
Editor: Francesca Nicosia

Camera: Chris Hopper & David Levine

Dying Wish. 29 minutes. color documentary film. WordWise Productions, LLC. Copyright 2008.

Compassion & Choices of Colorado has a new Web site: www.compassionandchoicesofcolorado.org

We are very excited about our new Web site. It allows us to have more flexibility in keeping our members informed about activities occurring both locally and nationally. Here you will find the mission statement and purposes of Compassion & Choices of Colorado. You will also see urgent messages, updates on legislation, and news from Colorado and around the world. The Web site features a Colorado-specific Advance Directive, which is covered on page 4 of this newsletter. We have included a calendar where you can see current and upcoming chapter events. We have also created an e-mail address: coloradochoices@gmail.com. If you have questions or need materials, please e-mail. We would also welcome any comments and suggestions from the membership. Please let your friends and family know about this resource.



Our Board of Directors wishes to expand. Would you like to join us? Please send your resume to Mollie Newman at newman36@comcast.net.

OPPONENTS DISTORT HEALTH CARE DEBATE

New legislation will empower, not force, seniors to talk with their doctors at the end of life. As the healthcare-reform debate heats up in Washington and around the country, opponents of end-of-life choice have launched a misinformation campaign to undermine a key provision of healthcare reform.

Compassion & Choices and its supporters have worked tirelessly with supportive members of Congress to include in proposed reform legislation a provision requiring Medicare to cover patient consultation with their doctors about end-of-life choice (§1233 of House Bill 3200).

We believe patients should have these consultations — and have them covered by Medicare and other health insurance — before it's too late to speak up on their own behalf and in time to learn whether or not their doctor will honor their wishes.

Anti-choice extremists and their allies in Congress are attacking this critical provision, creating doubt and confusion. To create fear, these opponents claim §1233 of House Bill 3200 will promote euthanasia. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Distortion: The government will force seniors to seek end-of-life counseling, and require them to sign a directive they would not otherwise want.

Truth: Patients are free to choose for themselves whether or not to talk to their doctor about end-of-life care. And they are free to embrace any level of end-of-life care — from "extraordinary measures" to hospice — in keeping with their personal wishes and values.

Distortion: The government will pressure or encourage doctors to counsel their elderly patients about euthanasia.

Truth: Out of more than 1500 words in the bill, not a single one references suicide, aid in dying, or euthanasia.

Distortion: The legislation mandates that doctors counsel seniors about ending their life every five years.

Truth: No counseling of any kind is mandated. The bill gives all the power to patients, so that if they choose to consult with their doctor about end-of-life matters, their doctor will give them the quality time they need, knowing that his or her time will be covered by Medicare.

AARP Executive Vice President John Rother has responded to these attacks as well, saying the criticism "misinterprets legislation that would actually help empower individuals and doctors to make their own choices on end-of-life care. This measure would not only help people make the best decisions for themselves, but also better ensure that their wishes are followed. To suggest otherwise is a gross, and even cruel, distortion — especially for any family that has been forced to make the difficult decisions on care for loved ones approaching the end of their lives."

Most Americans trust their doctors and trust seniors to make their own decisions. Pew Research Center surveyed adults nationwide in November 2005, asking: "Do you approve or disapprove of laws that let PATIENTS decide about being kept alive through medical treatment?" An overwhelming 84% responded YES, I APPROVE.

Americans value choice and this bill is about having choices.

Many people know the tragedy that can ensue when people cannot speak for themselves, when family members and others fight over treatment options. This bill encourages people to make their wishes clear, in consultation with a physician, in the clear light of day.

We need a healthcare system that pays doctors to talk with patients about all available treatment options at the end of life — not one that pushes these conversations aside because doctors can't bill for them.

To join or to renew your membership, write a check to Compassion & Choices for \$45 per individual (\$60 per couple); or request a lifetime membership at \$450 per individual (\$600 per couple). Mail it to the national office of Compassion & Choices, P O Box 101810, Denver CO 80250. You may also renew by credit card; simply call 303-639-1202.

REVISED ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

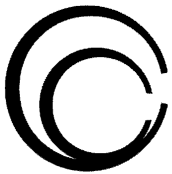
Our new Web site features the Colorado-specific Advance Directive. You will note that a dementia provision has been added to the Advance Directive form. You can download the document easily; it's in both .pdf and Word format. Note: It's not enough to download it and complete the form. You must arrange for witnesses and sign it. This may be the most important document on which you will ever place your signature. **Please remember the Terry Schiavo case.** If you encounter problems accessing the site, please call Mollie Newman, 303-693-0449. If you do not have access to the Internet, call Jacque Powell at 303-639-1202. She will print out and mail to you individually the material that's referenced. There is no charge for members. A fee of \$5 will cover printing and postage for non-members.

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Membership Meeting
Sunday, October 25, 2009
2:00 p.m. Details inside

The film "Dying Wish" will be shown to members and guests; a discussion led by Karen van Vooren and Peter Mayerson, M.D., will follow. The film concerns the death of retired surgeon Michael Miller. Your friends and family are most welcome.

The date on the top line of your address is when your dues are due. If that date has passed, please renew your membership. Help us help you.