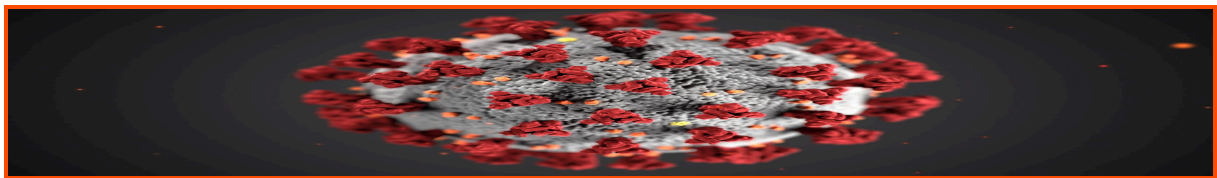


New Zealand Government Approves Euthanasia for COVID Patients

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433 Comments



The government in New Zealand has approved euthanasia for COVID patients if doctors decide that they are unlikely to survive.

The Ministry of Health determined that people have a “right” to die by lethal injection.

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New Zealand claimed that “in some circumstances a person with COVID-19 may be eligible for assisted dying,” according to a report from the **Catholic Herald**. In 2019, they had passed the End of Life Choice Act, which is one of the most extreme euthanasia laws on the planet.

The law allows anyone with a life expectancy of fewer than six months, or who are “suffering unbearably,” to be allowed assisted suicide in as little as four days. The law was ratified in 2020.

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The government was forced to state if COVID patients would qualify for euthanasia after Henoch Kloosterboer, editor of an anti-euthanasia website called ***The Defender*** submitted the nation's version of a Freedom of Information Act request asking for clarification.

The Catholic Herald report says that Kloosterboer argued that the policy left "the door wide open for abuse" of elderly and vulnerable patients.

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"It would not be hard to envisage a situation in which a speedy and sizeable rise in COVID-19 hospitalisations could result in pressure to utilise euthanasia and assisted suicide as tools to resolve such a serious crisis," Kloosterboer said.

Kloosterboer added that the legalization of euthanasia "has now made the COVID-19 pandemic potentially even more dangerous for the people of Aotearoa New Zealand."

"Doctors receive a government fee of \$1,000 plus expenses for every euthanasia death they perform," the Herald noted. Only 96 doctors out of approximately 16,000 in New Zealand have agreed to participate.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, a professor of palliative medicine in the UK, condemned New Zealand's decision in a comment to the Herald.

“It is bizarre that a country which has been trying to protect its citizens by closing down completely from a virus from which people can fully recover ... is now suggesting that these patients should be killed by their doctors,” she said. “It turns the ethos of medicine on its head.”

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“You really cannot predict death 100 per cent,” she added. “So why not support them while they are dying and leave the door open in case they are in the group that defies all odds and recovers completely?”

In July, the **Psychiatric Times** published an article in opposition to assisted suicide and noted that “preliminary reports suggest increased rates of suicide in the general population of states that have legalized PAS (physician assisted suicide). Specifically, ‘legalizing PAS has been associated with an increased rate of total suicides relative to other [non-PAS] states, and no decrease in non-assisted suicides.’ Similarly, suicide rates in the Netherlands (where medical euthanasia is legal) have accelerated, compared to neighboring countries that have not legalized medical euthanasia.”

They report that physician and ethicist Leon Kass, MD, has pointedly cautioned: “we must care for the dying, not make them dead.”

The American College of Physicians has said “physician-assisted suicide is neither a therapy nor a solution to difficult questions raised at the end of life. On the basis of substantive ethics, clinical practice, policy, and other concerns, the ACP does not support legalization of physician-assisted suicide. ... However, through high-quality care, effective communication, compassionate support, and the right resources, physicians can help patients control many aspects of how they live out life’s last chapter.”