

**Norman Goldstein MD**

**Panel will Study the Right to Doctor-Assisted Aid-in-Dying**

Governor Ben Cayetano has appointed a Blue-Ribbon Panel to study the controversial issue of death with dignity, or the right of a mentally competent, terminally-ill adult patient to request physician-assisted aid-in-dying.<sup>1</sup>

Last month's Special Issue on Death with Dignity will undoubtedly play a key role in the deliberations of this Blue Ribbon Panel. One of the panel members suggested to me that it might be called a "black ribbon panel." Blue or black, it is a very, very important panel, a panel that will make recommendations to the Governor and the State Legislators pertaining to this—the most critical medical/legal issue of the decade in Hawaii and the nation.

The panel members are **Dr Naleen N. Andrade**, psychiatrist; **Dr Max Botticelli**, retired University of Hawaii School of Medicine professor; **Dr Norman Goldstein**, editor of the Hawaii Medical Association Journal; **Dr Brian Issell**, director of UH's Cancer Center of Hawaii; **Dr Larry Muike**, director of the state Department of Health; **A.A. "Bud" Smyser**, contributing editor of the Honolulu Star-Bulletin; **Betty Vitousek**, retired Circuit Court judge; **Mary Cooke**, senior citizen; **Jeffrey P. Crabtree** and **James Pietsch**, attorneys; **Lawrence Heintz**, UH-Hilo professor of humanities; **Hideto Kato**, former director of the state Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism; **Rev. Beth Donaldson**, Kapaa United Church of Christ; **Sister Roselani Enomoto**, director of the Catholic social ministry office on Maui; and **Rev. Yoshiaki Fujitani**, retired bishop of Honpa Hongwanji Temple.

There are two sides to every discussion. The **Hawaii Medical Library** and **Ann Catts, MD**, retired pathologist, presented an exhibit on "Death with Dignity—Pro and Con." While the American Medical Association has "officially" opposed physician-assisted aid-in-dying at this time, many of its members, and most of the physicians who are not members of the AMA, are in favor of assisted aid-in-dying and some have actually assisted their patients with their final wishes.

This is just the beginning of a long debate about this critical problem. I suggest that you write to the Governor; your state legislators; and send a "letter to the editor" with your comments and concerns. Space permitting, we will try to publish these letters.

**References**

1. Ohira, Rod. Honolulu Star-Bulletin, November 8, 1996, p. A-6

**Hawaii Medical Journal**

Extra copies of the *Hawaii Medical Journal* September Special issue on Domestic Violence and the December Special issue on Death and Dying are available. For more information please contact the Hawaii Medical Association at (808) 536-7702, or Fax us at (808) 528-2376.

I am working on a book on medical ethics and would like to enlist the help of other physicians to answer this question: *Have you ever faced an ethical dilemma, and if so, how did you resolve it?*

I am interested in all aspects of medical ethics—human experimentation, ethics of reproductive technology, abortion, medical treatment of the uninsured and poor, malpractice, physician assisted suicide, the right-to-die (why some doctors do not honor Living Wills), genetic counseling, genetic manipulation, euthanasia, kidney, lung and heart transplant, use of fetal tissue, or any other situation concerning an ethical dilemma.

Claude A. Frazier, MD

Please reply to:  
Claude A. Frazier, MD  
4C Doctors Park  
Asheville, NC 28801

**President's Message**

**John S. Spangler MD**

The Hawaii State Legislature will open on the third Wednesday of January, and will be in session for 60 working days. Dr Leonard Howard will again serve as legislative analyst for the HMA and HMA Staff members Lisa Tong and Becky Kendro will monitor all health related legislation.

HMA will host a reception for legislators at the HMA Office on Monday, February 3. All HMA members and spouses are invited to attend, however reservations are required.

I also wanted you to know that the HMA Reorganization Task Force, chaired by Paul DeMare, MD and co-chaired by Patricia Chinn, MD is meeting regularly. Meetings are open to all members and are scheduled for January 6, 13, and 27 at 5:30 p.m. Please let the HMA operator know if you plan to attend. The Task Force report will be presented to a special House of Delegates session which is scheduled for Saturday, April 5 in the HMA Conference Room. Information will be circulated prior to the meeting.

The next year will bring many changes for us as we approach the legislative process. Please help us by joining the legislative committee!

You do make a difference but we need your help! Call the HMA office at 536-7702 to get into the middle of this process.

**CPR**

can keep  
your love alive

American Heart  
Association™



Fighting Heart Disease  
and Stroke