

1 **LEGALIZATION OF PHYSICIAN AID IN DYING**  
2 (*Resolution of Witness*)  
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5 **RESOLUTION**  
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7 **WHEREAS**, life is both a sacred and a perishable gift from God;  
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9 **WHEREAS**, God intends that created life be more than simply the existence of a human  
10 organism (John 10:10);  
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12 **WHEREAS** faith sees death as a door into another room in God’s house (John 14:  
13 2,3,19);  
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15 **WHEREAS**, compassion—love acted out—flows from the heart of God and through  
16 God’s children (Luke 10: 25-37);  
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18 **WHEREAS**, from the beginning of our lives to life everlasting, God leads us, sustains  
19 us, and is always with us (Psalm 139: 7-12);  
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21 **WHEREAS**, medical technology, pain management and palliative care have made great  
22 advances, yet some persons still face intolerable suffering during a terminal illness;  
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24 **WHEREAS**, the Ninth General Synod and the Eighteenth General Synod both passed  
25 end-of-life choice resolutions entitled “Rights and Responsibilities of Christians  
26 Regarding Human Death,” which did not address the issue of physician aid in dying;  
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28 **WHEREAS**, other faith communities have addressed end-of-life issues over the past 20  
29 years;  
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31 **WHEREAS**, Oregon in 1997 passed a “Death with Dignity Act” permitting a mentally  
32 capable, dying adult to request and receive from a physician a prescription to hasten  
33 death if the patient finds his or her suffering to be unbearable, but only if strict and  
34 specific safeguards are followed;  
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36 **WHEREAS**, in Oregon since 1997 there have been no incidents of abuse of this law, and  
37 its use has been a rare choice, since the will to live is the greatest safeguard there is, yet  
38 thousands who will never use the law to hasten their own death are comforted to know  
39 that this choice is legally available if they should be among the few who need it and  
40 choose it;  
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42 **WHEREAS**, The United States Supreme Court has affirmed Oregon’s right to have such  
43 a law;  
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45 **WHEREAS**, many physicians, religious leaders, dying patients and family members  
46 strongly support physician aid in dying with strong safeguards to prevent abuse;

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**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Twenty-sixth General Synod calls upon the local churches, conferences, and Justice and Witness Ministries in consultation with UCC Disabilities Ministries, Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM), UCC Professional Chaplains and Counselors, UCC Faith Community Nurses and Physicians to study the following proposal and report their views through Justice and Witness Ministries to the Twenty-seventh General Synod for further consideration and action:

that on the grounds of compassion and choice, if strict safeguards to prevent abuse are followed, a terminally ill and mentally competent adult should have a legal right to request and receive medication from a willing physician to hasten death if the patient finds his or her suffering to be unbearable.

**FUNDING**

Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The General Minister and President in association with Local Church Ministries and Justice and Witness Ministries are requested to be the primary implementers of this resolution, working in conjunction with Conference and Association personnel.