



NEW YORK
CITY BAR

November 2, 2017

Hon. Richard Gottfried
Chair, Health Committee
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building 822
Albany, NY 12248

Hon. Kemp Hannon
Chair, Health Committee
New York State Senate
The Capitol, Room 420
Albany, NY 12247

Re: Request for Public Hearings on the Topic of Medical Aid in Dying

Dear Assembly Member Gottfried and Senator Hannon:

On behalf of the Bioethical Issues Committee, Health Law Committee, Legal Problems of the Aging Committee, Mental Health Committee, and Science and the Law Committee of the New York City Bar Association, we are writing to request that the Health Committees host public hearings on the topic of Medical Aid in Dying. The recent holding by the Court of Appeals in *Myers v. Schneiderman* makes this issue ripe for public debate on the following question: should New York develop a public policy proposal that would make medical aid in dying available and accessible to, and affordable for, New Yorkers with terminal illness?

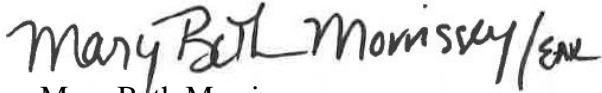
Our Committees recently issued a report on Medical Aid in Dying, the aim of which is to foster more robust debate and deliberation around the topic.¹ Our report takes a broad and critical look at Medical Aid in Dying, framing the legal and ethical issues while paying particular attention to social and structural determinants of health, mental health and well-being, such as income, education, housing, and food security. Overall, our analysis found that in light of the current political and legal climate, issues surrounding Medical Aid in Dying need to be addressed in open public debate to ensure that any changes to New York law would assure terminally ill patients in our state equitable access to palliative and end-of-life care options.

Following the commendable model of the Health Committee hearings on medical marijuana, we believe that hearings on aid-in-dying should be held throughout the State and include all related stakeholders. This will allow for a robust debate on important matters of public policy including issues of equity and adequacy of health systems, as well as funding for well-designed research studies. We would welcome the opportunity to participate in such conversations, and we offer our assistance in facilitating a public discussion.

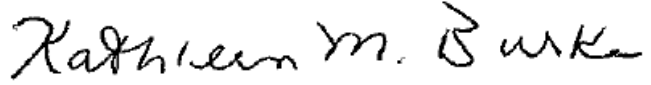
¹ http://s3.amazonaws.com/documents.nycbar.org/files/2017130-AidinDyingNY_WhitePaper_FINAL_5.30.17.pdf

If our Committees can be helpful as the Legislature considers Medical Aid in Dying, please contact Elizabeth Kocienda, Associate Director of Advocacy at the City Bar at ekocienda@nycbar.org or 212-382-4788. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



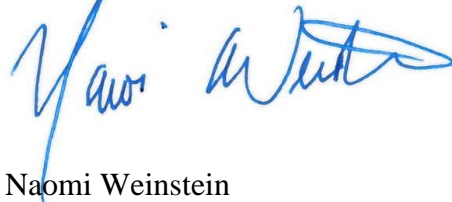
Mary Beth Morrissey
Chair, Bioethical Issues Committee



Kathleen M. Burke
Chair, Health Law Committee



Britt Burner
Chair, Legal Problems of the Aging Committee



Naomi Weinstein
Chair, Mental Health Committee



Aileen Nielsen
Chair, Science and the Law Committee

Cc: Hon. Amy Paulin
Hon. Diane Savino